

A LAST SUPPER SEDER:
A NEW RITUAL AND HAGGADAH FOR CHRISTIANS
BASED ON THE PASSOVER SEDER AND THE LAST SUPPER

by

RABBI JO DAVID

DEMONSTRATION PROJECT

Submitted to
New York Theological Seminary
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of

DOCTOR OF MINISTRY

New York, New York
2014

Abstract

The conjunction of Passover and Easter creates a unique religious opportunity for both Jewish and Christian communities. That the two holidays are related is undeniable. What that actually means for Christians and Jews is very complicated. There was a time when Easter was a holiday during which attacks against Jewish communities was encouraged by religious and municipal authorities. I have vivid memories of my grandmother, who came from the Ukraine, describing pogroms that took place each year on Easter. One of her brothers was murdered during one such event, his dismembered body deposited in a bag on the family's doorstep.

For Christians, Jesus' celebration of the Last Supper, widely (though not universally) regarded as a Passover Seder, is a religious event of foundational importance to the development of Christianity. Many ministers (mistakenly) believe that celebrating a Passover Seder with a modern Jewish or Messianic Haggadah is a way of recreating or drawing closer to the Last Supper. For this reason, in the weeks leading up to Easter it is not unusual for American congregational rabbis to receive calls from local Christian clergy asking for assistance in leading a Passover Seder in their church. Some rabbis are willing to do this. Others are not.

The impetus for this Demonstration Project was a Seder and Haggadah I created with a Lutheran minister in 1997 while serving as the rabbi of Union Reform Temple in Freeport, New York. The minister, Pastor Kimberly Wilson, had asked that I come to her church and lead her community in a Passover Seder. I explained that I was reluctant to do this because I believe that Christians celebrating a Passover Seder as a form of Christian worship is an inappropriate borrowing of a significant Jewish ritual. We discussed the

reasons why her community wanted to experience a Passover Service. While there was curiosity about the Passover Seder, the impetus for the request was based on a desire to draw closer to an experience of the Last Supper.

Pastor Wilson and I agreed to work together to develop a new type of Seder and Haggadah for Christians which would teach about the Passover Seder while offering Christians a ritual and liturgy that would incorporate material about the Last Supper. The program, *A Last Supper Celebration*, was well received by the participants, was given significant coverage by local newspapers, and was written up in a Lutheran magazine as an example of creative liturgy and ritual.

An important aspect of *A Last Supper Celebration* was that it had a strong interfaith underpinning. By working together and sharing ideas from our own religious backgrounds, we modeled many positive values for both her community and my congregation: respect for the integrity of discrete religious traditions, the possibility of respectful and productive dialogue over ritual and religious issues and the value of struggling with issues of history and faith to create new spiritual and religious rituals and language.

My Demonstration Project, *A Last Supper Seder*, is meant to be facilitated by Christian and Jewish leaders who may or may not be ordained clergy. Unlike a Passover Seder which is traditionally conducted at home, *A Last Supper Seder* is meant to be held in a church social hall or other suitable community venue. The Seder is designed to meet Christians' spiritual needs for connection to the Last Supper while retaining aspects of a traditional Jewish Seder that are appropriate for Christians. The story of the Exodus from Egypt and of Jesus' appearance on the world stage as a significant religious leader is told

through texts from the Tanach (the Hebrew Bible) and the New Testament and through music appropriate to Christian sensibilities. This is not a “Christianized” Passover Seder but rather a radical rethinking of how Judaism and Christianity come together at the Last Supper and how that intersection might be celebrated by Christians.

אַרְמִי אֶבֶד אָבִי
Arami Ovaid Avi

My father was a wandering Aramean . . .
(*The Feast of Freedom* Haggadah; see also Deuteronomy 26:5).
The Aramean sought to destroy my father . . .
(ArtScroll Haggadah).

In appreciation of all my teachers of all faiths
who taught me to appreciate, embrace and rejoice in diversity,
controversy, rigorous scholarship and learning in its many forms.

“Infinite diversity in infinite combinations”
A Vulcan (Star Trek) Proverb, said to be based on the teachings of Maimonides.

With Thanks to the Holy One of Blessing,
The One Before Whom I Stand,
from Whom All Wisdom, Strength and Insight Flow.

For Gil. “I’ll be loving you, always.”

For Neil, whose faith in me is a gift beyond rubies.

Table of Contents

Ancient Sources	7
Chapter 1 Introduction: What’s a Nice Jewish Girl Doing with a Project Like This?	9
Chapter 2 Reflections on the Origin of Passover	36
Chapter 3 The Seder and the Haggadah	48
Chapter 4 How the Changing Interfaith Landscape in America Led to the Development of the Last Supper Celebration – the Precursor to The Last Supper Seder...	114
Chapter 5 A Last Supper Seder	150
Chapter 6 Reflections	179
Appendices	207
Bibliography	372

Ancient Sources

TaNaCh

Genesis
Exodus
Leviticus
Numbers
Deuteronomy
Joshua
Judges
1 Samuel
2 Samuel
1 Kings
2 Kings
Isaiah
Jeremiah
Ezekiel
Hosea
Joel
Amos
Obadiah
Jonah
Micah
Nahum
Habakkuk
Zephaniah
Haggai
Zechariah
Malachi
Psalms
Proverbs
Job
Song of Songs
Ruth
Lamentations
Qohelet (Ecclesiastes)
Esther
Daniel
Ezra
Nehemiah
1 Chronicles
2 Chronicles

New Testament

Matthew
 Mark
 Luke
 John
 Acts of the Apostles
 Romans
 1 Corinthians
 2 Corinthians
 Galatians
 Ephesians
 Philippians
 Colossians
 1 Thessalonians
 2 Thessalonians
 1 Timothy
 2 Timothy
 Titus
 Philemon
 Hebrews
 James
 1 Peter
 2 Peter
 1 John
 2 John
 3 John
 Jude
 Revelation (Apocalypse)

Rabbinic Texts

Mishna

Mishna Torah (Maimonides)

O.H. (Orah Hayyim; section of Tur dealing primarily with the Hebrew calendar)

Shulchan Aruch, the foundational Code of Jewish Law; mid 16th century. Written by Joseph Caro (Israel); published with an interlinear commentary for Ashkenazic Jews by Moses Isserles.

Talmud Bavli (Babylonian Talmud; cited as B. followed by the name of the Tractate; e.g., B. Pesachim)

Talmud Yerushalmi (Jerusalem Talmud; cited as Y. followed by the name of the Tractate; e.g., Y. Pesachim)

Tosefta, oral law not included in the Mishna;

Tosafot, medieval commentaries on the Talmud. In most Talmud editions, found opposite Rashi's notes on the outer margin of the page.

Tur, referring to Arba' a Turim by Ya'akov ben Asher; 13th–14th century Cologne; includes O.H. (see above); halachic Code that established the format for the Shulchan Aruch.

CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION: WHAT'S A NICE JEWISH GIRL DOING WITH A PROJECT LIKE THIS?

In 2002, I was diagnosed with a 9/11 related Post Traumatic Stress Disorder. One of the things that PTSD can do to you is completely destroy one's sense of self and one's understanding of one's place in the world. At the time I was running a not-for-profit organization that I had founded and was doing a great deal of work in Germany on behalf of Germany's re-emerging Progressive Jewish communities. Suddenly nothing made sense to me. I was fatigued, depressed, and unsure about the value of my work. I closed my foundation, although I continued to be active with various communities in Germany on a private basis.

As part of my recovery process, I did a personal inventory, trying to decide what parts of myself I needed to recover, what needed to be jettisoned, and what new areas needed to be explored. I realized that the years between 1983 and 2002 had been lived almost exclusively in the "Jewish" world. Everyone I knew was Jewish and, almost without exception, Caucasian. This wasn't because I was prejudiced, but that the makeup of the Jewish world in New York was, and continues to be, predominantly of Eastern European background and almost exclusively Caucasian. Post 9/11, it seemed wrong to me that I had no friends who were of different faiths and different racial and ethnic backgrounds.

The problem, as I saw it, was that I had few opportunities to meet, much less socialize with people of different religious, racial and ethnic backgrounds. Over the next

few years, I worked on how I could change this imbalance in my life. At the same time I was reconsidering my career choices. I took a course in group dynamics with the thought of doing bereavement groups. While I ran groups for several years, I found that I needed to do something different.

Finally, I decided to pursue a Doctor of Ministry degree. This was something I had wanted to do for some time but, for a variety of reasons, had put on the back burner. I felt that the time was right. My husband's work (we are both self employed) was going well and I had enough freelance work doing Jewish life cycle events to fund the tuition costs. The major question was, "Which Program Should I Choose?"

My goal was to find an area in which to work that would enhance the scope of my rabbinic work. Not all rabbis work with congregations. There are many other options for rabbis: chaplaincy, teaching, not-for profit Jewish institutional work, interfaith counseling, conversion training, writing and lecturing are just some ways in which rabbis pursue their rabbinate.

When I began to look for a Doctor of Ministry program, I realized that most Jewish programs were primarily chaplaincy oriented. I was not interested in that career orientation. I remembered that a friend and former professor, Rabbi Shohama Weiner, had enjoyed her Doctor of Ministry program at New York Theological Seminary some years before. I had actually been on her Site Team. I went to the New York Theological Seminary website and saw that a Doctor of Ministry in Multifaith Ministry was being offered.

For much of my rabbinic career I had been active in interfaith work. Multifaith seemed to me like a broader extension of work I liked to do. The fact that New York

Theological Seminary was a Christian seminary with a racially and ethnically diverse student body was also very attractive to me. I hoped that I would meet a wide variety of people and make friends outside the Jewish community.

In 2008 I joined the Doctor of Ministry Multifaith program and began to change and grow in ways I had never expected. I was able to do my course work and my project, but after the spring of 2010 I had to put my work on my Doctor of Ministry on hold because of the recession. In June, 2013 I was finally able to resume the work on writing my thesis with the goal of receiving my degree in 2014.

Early on in the Multifaith program, working with Dr. Dale Irvin on the development of our thesis projects, he explained that the project should, in some way be transformational. Ironically, it was not the experience of doing the project that was transformational for me but rather my interactions with the New York Theological Seminary students, graduates and faculty. To discuss my transformation, it is necessary to take a brief detour into my past.

I grew up in East Flatbush, in Brooklyn in the 1950's, in a white Jewish enclave. My grandparents, with whom we lived, had emigrated from the Ukraine in 1922. My father was the son of German Jewish parents whose parents had been born in the United States. He had lived most of his life in the German Jewish enclave of Washington Heights. My parents were died in the wool *Democrats and politically very liberal, but when it came to issues of race and ethnicity they were typical of their time and class. They were wary of people who were not Jews and fearful of people who were not Caucasian. I attended an elementary school that was almost exclusively Jewish and completely Caucasian. My junior high school was very similar. While my parents never

uttered a bigoted word, I grew up feeling that people who were not white and Jewish were to be feared at worst, probably not trusted, and avoided if at all possible.

Happily, I married a man, also Jewish, who had grown up in the Canarsie projects in Brooklyn surrounded by all types of people. Because he was absolutely color blind and believed that everyone was his friend, he helped me, over the years, to become comfortable in a wide variety of settings and with all different types of people. When I began studying at New York Theological Seminary was ready for a wider experience of the world.

By the time I entered New York Theological Seminary was very well traveled. I had worked in Alma Ata, Kazakhstan, had visited New Zealand and Australia, had sailed throughout the Caribbean as a cruise ship rabbi and had many Israel and European trips under my belt. There were still many places in the world I wanted to visit including Antarctica. Not on my list was Africa.

At the end of 2009 I was part of an interfaith mission to Ghana in association with New York Theological Seminary. When I told my mother I was going to Ghana she wanted to know if there were any other “white” people in the group. (How our past hangs on.) I realized that I had not even considered this.

Ghana was a revelation. I felt like I had come “home.” (It was feeling very similar to what I had felt when I visited Israel for the first time.) It didn’t make sense to me, but Ghana (and later South Africa) spoke to my heart in a way that was extremely powerful and unique. The trip to Ghana in particular changed the way I looked at the world and set my feet on a new path that is still rolling out before me.

I'm still processing this experience, trying to understand what exactly it was that transformed my view of the world. I saw things, heard things, experienced things that were completely outside of my experience. It wasn't that these things were "exotic." It was more that they required me to completely dispense with everything I knew of the world and start all over again.

Professor Kofi Opoku, a brilliant scholar of traditional African culture who taught in the United States for many years, put a walking stick in my hand and guided me through his farms. In his late 70's at the time and semi-retired, he described himself as "a simple farmer." He introduced me to plants I'd never seen before and showed me how they grew. It was like walking through Eden. We picked coconuts off a tree and sat in its shade as we drank the sweet milk and ate the meat. "Prof" speaks in proverbs. He's a simple farmer the same way that Moses was a simple shepherd.

I met a chief who told me about how he received his first goat skin at the age of 10. When we attended a traditional New Year's celebration and approached him to offer our formal greetings, he admired my traditional Ghanaian dress – dark brown and orange, the correct colors for that particular occasion. I was inordinately pleased that I had been able to fit into the culture and that my effort had been recognized. I had such a sense of belonging, and to have this acknowledged was extremely powerful.

One morning I woke up and wrote my first "African" proverb. It was early in the morning and a rooster and a cat were welcoming the dawn together.

The cat that sings with the rooster will have no breakfast.

Writing that proverb, perhaps more than anything else, was a sign that my view of the world had dramatically shifted. Nothing has been quite the same since then.

One of the ways that this new appreciation of the world has become manifest is in my teaching at Berkeley College in Manhattan. In 2011, I had the opportunity to begin teaching Comparative Religion at Berkeley College in Manhattan. My prior teaching experience had been within the Jewish community where I had a common intellectual and educational background with my students. However, after studying at New York Theological Seminary and going to Ghana, I found myself interested in working with students whose backgrounds were very different from my own

Berkeley's Manhattan campus has a student body that is extremely diverse, with a high enrollment of black and Hispanic students and international students. Most of the students are first generation college students with less than spectacular preparation for college. Many students lack parental support for their educational and vocational ambitions. The young women, in particular, are very vulnerable to the demands of their families to make "devotion to family" their number one priority over classroom attendance and the need to properly prepare for their classes. As I began teaching other courses at Berkeley – Ethics, Bio Ethics, Science and Feminist Thought – and met more students, I fell in love with them. Their struggles, vitality and desire to create a better life for themselves and their families strike a familiar chord for me; the search for the means to a better life through education is at the core of the Jewish experience.

When I was in my second year at New York Theological Seminary was struggling with the direction in which I wanted to take my rabbinate. It had become clear to me that the congregational rabbinate was not what God had in mind for me, despite the fact that it was a setting and work that I loved. It had also become clear that my future rabbinate was going to become non-traditional; I just couldn't quite understand what that meant. My

fellow students were very encouraging about my following an uncharted path. There are still many ways in which my new rabbinate is unfolding. Teaching at Berkeley, where I also volunteer my time to help originate and support Multifaith student and faculty activities, is one aspect of my new rabbinate. The undefined aspects are a work in progress, but I am now able to embrace the uncertainty of the future.

How My Thesis Project Came Into Being

“Would you be willing to come to our Lutheran church in Baldwin (Long Island) and conduct a Passover Seder?”

Pastor Kimberly Wilson of Bethlehem Lutheran Church, Baldwin, New York was a local colleague in 1995 when I was the rabbi of Union Reform Temple in Freeport, Long Island. Her question to me was the beginning of a long exploration into the meaning of the Passover Seder for both Jews and Christians. At the time, I was aware that some churches presented Passover “Seders” for their communities during the Passover/Easter “season.” I didn’t approve. To me, the Seder was a Jewish ritual that could have no real meaning for Christians. In addition, I regarded the presentation of a “Seder” in a Church as a completely inappropriate usurpation of Jewish rituals for non-Jewish purposes.

Protecting Jewish rituals and traditions from encroachment by non-Jewish groups was very important to me personally and as a rabbi in 1995. It was a concern that I shared with most of my rabbinic colleagues. On Long Island, the 1990’s was a time of great activity by messianic groups like “Jews for Jesus” that targeted Jews who were disaffected from Judaism or not very knowledgeable. There were a number of active

messianic “synagogues” in the New York area and on Long Island. The deceptive practices of these groups - luring uneducated Jews with “Jewish” symbols, rituals and customs while love bombing them and preaching a Christian message – were often very successful in luring unsuspecting Jews into conversion to Christianity. While “messianic” synagogues are not all related to “Jews for Jesus,” in the eyes of the Jewish community, all groups that target Jews for conversion and use Jewish symbols to do so are equally “traif.” (Not “kosher.”) The Jewish community does not accept as Jewish any member of a messianic synagogue who professes Jesus as his/her savior. That being said, people who are matrilineal Jews are always welcome to return to the community without conversion, as long as they no longer believe in salvation through the agency of Jesus.

The targeting of uneducated or secular Jews by Christian missionaries was then and continues to be of tremendous concern within the Jewish community. These groups are often successful because they offer Jews, especially Jews who are dating Christians, a possible solution to their religious dilemma. “Are you a completed Jew?” they will ask, as though being a Jew according to Jewish law is not sufficient. These missionaries tell Jews that accepting *Yeshua* as their savior will make them completely Jewish. They don’t have to go to synagogue, give up eating pork and cheeseburgers or observe the Jewish Sabbath. It often takes some time for the target of these missionary activities to figure out that *Yeshua* means Jesus.¹ By then, it may be too late.

I had come to Freeport in 1994, a recently minted rabbi with only a couple of years of experience under my belt. Soon after I arrived in Freeport it was discovered that

¹ The name “Yeshua” is Hebrew. The English translation is “Joshua.” The name means “The Lord is salvation.” However, when the name Yeshua was translated from Hebrew to Greek for use in the Septuagint, the name was transliterated as *Iēsous*. The English spelling for *Iēsous* is “Jesus.” <http://christianity.about.com/od/faqhelpdesk/f/jesuaryeshua.htm>. Accessed Aug. 15, 2013.

the local Fire Department owned and had displayed awards it had received from the local Ku Klux Klan. There were many people in the community who didn't think this was problematic. I've been unable to find the articles in the local newspaper that reported on this situation. However, I remember quite clearly the angry letters to the editor from local volunteer fire fighters (all Caucasian and Christian) who strongly felt that there was nothing wrong with displaying the award. It should be noted that in the mid-1990's Freeport was going through a major demographic change. Older Jews, once an important part of the community, were moving away and their houses were being purchased by African Americans. Freeport is adjacent to Roosevelt, Long Island, an almost entirely black, lower class community. Baldwin, another community like Freeport, was also experiencing the same issues. It was a time of racial and social disruption. (In the late 1960's, a cross was burned on the lawn of a Jewish family in Roslyn, Long Island, where my family lived. The roots of racism and anti-Semitism are very deep on Long Island.)

Our congregation, Union Reform Temple, with a membership of about 250 families, was affiliated with the Union of American Hebrew Congregations (Reform).²

² The American Jewish Community has a wide range of practice and belief. While almost all Jews hold the Torah (first five books of the Hebrew Bible) as sacred and the entire Tanach (the Hebrew Bible – known to Christians as “The Old Testament”) as slightly less, but still very holy, however that sense of holiness may be expressed varies according to the ideas and practices of different “Movements.” Movements are not like Christian denominations. There are not differences in theology as such. Actually, rabbinic seminaries do not teach theology! Rather, the names of the movements reflect the specific group's attitude toward the binding nature of Jewish Law. All movements in America are “made in America” to some extent. The Reform Movement began in Germany in the early 1800's and was brought to America by German Jewish immigrants. However, the American version is much more “liberal” than the German version, which today is called “Progressive” throughout the world except the United States and Canada. The Conservative Movement is a breakaway movement from American Reform. In the late 1880's, it retained traditions like separate seating for men and women in the synagogue and strict adherence to the Jewish dietary laws (kashruth.) The Modern Orthodox Movement is also an American movement and a breakaway from the Conservative Movement, which was deemed by some members to be too “liberal.” The Reconstructionist Movement is a breakaway movement from the Conservative Movement, but to the “left.” It is more liberal than the Conservative Movement, but more traditional than the Reform Movement. Each of these four Movements have their own Rabbinical Seminaries and Congregational organizations. There are also new groups that have cropped up in the last thirty years or so. The Hasidic Movement is a world unto itself with its own variants. These remarks are intended to provide a basic outline of how Jews

Ours was the largest of three synagogues in Freeport. Baldwin, the next town, had a Conservative congregation of about the same size. At one time – the 1950's – 1980's – Freeport and Baldwin had been "Jewish" areas. However, by the time I arrived the Jewish population had aged and dwindled. It was definitely a declining area for Jewish life. In fact, in 1998, a year after I left, Union Reform Congregation closed its doors.

Joining the local Interfaith Clergy Council was high on my list of priorities when I first came to Freeport. From the very beginning of my rabbinic training I was interested in interfaith work. Freeport's Clergy Council which also included my rabbinic colleague from Baldwin was made up of a small group of Christian ministers of various Protestant denominations and two rabbis (my Conservative colleague in Baldwin.) None of the local Catholic clergy were willing to participate. The members of the council did their best to help and support one another, especially when world events required a unified message of peace.

One of the first issues that arose after I joined the Clergy Council had to do with an application for membership by a "rabbi" of a nearby messianic synagogue. My rabbinic colleague from Baldwin and I explained that this was not acceptable to us. After much discussion, the group decided to decline the application. However, even at the time I wondered if perhaps, in the interest of true interfaith dialogue, it might not have been appropriate to include this person. Had we had more rabbinic colleagues in the group, the other rabbi and I might have been more willing to make room for someone who was so

see themselves in relation to one another. Over the last 40 years or so, with the ordination of women by the Reform Movement in 1972, the differences between the movements have blurred and are currently undergoing significant changes. The Reform Movement has taken on more traditional practices like a modified form of the dietary laws, the Conservative Movement is trying to figure out how to deal with a growing number of interfaith families and children, and the Orthodox Movement is being pressured on many different fronts over issues of participation of women lay leaders and the possibility of female rabbis. (The Orthodox Movement is the only Movement that does not yet ordain female rabbis or cantors.)

challenging to us. However, we were always working very hard to help our Christian colleagues understand why, for example, we were not willing to co-sponsor a Christmas/Chanukah party and events of a similar ilk. Having a messianic religious leader in our group would have blurred the lines between Judaism and faux Judaism, as represented by the leader of the messianic congregation. We (the “defenders” of Judaism) felt too vulnerable to chance it.³

It was against this background that I received the call from Pastor Wilson. Here was another scenario for blurring the lines between Judaism and Christianity. However, I was unwilling to give her an outright “no.” There were no other Reform rabbis in the area for her to turn to. My Conservative colleagues would absolutely turn down her request. In her search to do what she felt was important for her community she might turn to one of the messianic leaders. That was a possibility that needed to be avoided at all costs.

These were the thoughts that went through my mind as I considered what I might say to Pastor Wilson. Finally I decided to be honest with her. I told her that I understood her request as a desire on the part of her community to draw closer to Jesus through experiencing some form of the Last Supper. I explained that the Seder as practiced today in the Jewish world has very little in common with the Last Supper, so that it really wasn’t an appropriate vehicle for Christian spirituality. However, I suggested that

³ My thesis advisor suggested that I phrase this as a matter of theological integrity rather than as vulnerability. However, to do so would be to downplay the strong sense of being “under siege” that rabbis working in congregations experienced during this period of time. There is also the reality that many rabbis of my generation – baby boomers – carry with us very strong feelings of being vulnerable because we’re Jews. For many of us, the desire to enter the rabbinate is associated with the Holocaust in one way or another. For me, one motivating factor in becoming a rabbi was to try to undo some of the damage done by Hitler to the Jewish community. I believed, and still believe, that helping Jews draw closer to their heritage is a way of helping to guarantee the continuity of the Jewish People. Although the work that I have chosen as a rabbi is to be present and “out” as a Jew in places where Judaism is virtually unknown, I always carry with me the knowledge that there is danger in these situations. The only places where I have ever felt truly safe have been in Israel and in Ghana.

perhaps she and I could collaborate on some sort of program based on the Seder and the Last Supper that would be appropriate for Christians while educating them about the Seder as it is practiced in Jewish homes. Thus was born the prototype for *A Last Supper Seder*, my Doctor of Ministry project.

Pastor Wilson and I created a liturgy that combined traditional Jewish Seder rituals – 4 cups of grape juice, eating matzah, bitter herbs and charoset, the chanting of hymns of praise with liturgy that was appropriate for Christians. In place of traditional Jewish hand washing, and as an acknowledgement of Jesus washing the feet of the disciples, we had participants wash one another's hands. We referenced texts from the Tanach (The Hebrew Bible) and the New Testament. We co-led the program for two consecutive years. *A Last Supper Celebration* was very well received and got impressive local media coverage. It was even featured in a national Lutheran journal.

One of the frustrations I had with the Haggadah we created was that it did not contain the text of the information about Judaism and the Seder that I presented during the Seder. This was done extemporaneously. Because both Pastor Wilson and I had very active congregational schedules, the amount of time we could devote to this project was limited. I always thought it would be interesting to do more research about the Jewish and Christian texts relating to Passover and the Last Supper and to rewrite the Haggadah with this material and all the "Jewish" explanations that were missing from the original.

In 2008, when I was beginning my Doctor of Ministry program at New York Theological Seminary, I had a discussion with Reverend Dr. Eleanor Moody-Shepherd about my project. She suggested that I create a feminist Haggadah. Knowing that there are many of these in circulation, I explained that I wasn't really interested in pursuing

that type of project. However, I suddenly found myself telling her about my Last Supper program. Here was my opportunity to do the scholarly work and a more considered exploration of how a ritual might be developed that could be truly responsive to modern Christian spiritual sensibilities. Thus, the *Last Supper Seder* project was born.

Methodology

What does a rabbi know about Christian spiritual needs? Certainly not everything, but some things, I discovered. From my interfaith work, from my reading, from talking with Christians as I traveled around the world, from participating in worship services in churches and from my collaboration with Pastor Wilson, I had actually learned quite a bit. The most important piece of information that I had picked up on my peripatetic wanderings was that many Jews and Christians share a deep existential need to draw closer the Holy One. I also found that Christians and Jews in the 21st century are very open to sharing and borrowing worship and spiritual rituals and customs.

What seemed difficult to me in 1997 as a young rabbi no longer seemed so problematic after 20 years of serving the Jewish and non-Jewish community. After all, there is always sharing and borrowing between religions that exist alongside one another. Sephardic Jews in Turkey raise their palms upward in thanks to God, not unlike the custom of some fundamentalist Christians; Jewish brides in India observe local henna rituals; Jews and Christians both use Psalm 23 for funeral and memorial services and the Birkat Kohanim (the Priestly Blessing – Numbers 6:24-26) in a number of different ritual settings.

The difference, I think, between “then” (1997) and now (2014) can perhaps be laid at the feet, if you will, of globalization. Thanks to the internet, we now have the world – and infinite cultures – at our fingertips. The world to which we relate today is both larger and smaller than it was in 1997.

When I began working at Union Reform Temple in 1994, I had to fight for a computer. The previous rabbi, an older man, had not had one. The Board of Directors didn’t understand why I needed to get “on line.” Truth to tell, there wasn’t much to find on the internet in those days, but I knew that having e-mail and being able to surf the web was critical to the performance of my job. I made a pest of myself until they agreed to the expenditure - \$3,000. I became one of AOL’s first online “ask the rabbis.” Today, of course, we carry our computers in our pockets and can’t imagine life without our cell phones and iPads.

I think it was much easier in the world before to insist on the exclusivity of religious rituals/liturgy/traditions. Such thoughts were much like national isolationism during the 20th century. Many countries, including the United States, believed that if they didn’t get involved in the European conflict during World War II, the parties involved would somehow settle things themselves. What they did in Europe wouldn’t affect us. We know now that such attitudes were not correct.

Similarly, the idea that we can “protect” religious ideas, rituals and customs from appropriation or borrowing is also incorrect in a world where one has instant access to information. Pandora’s Box is open and there is no going back. The best that we can hope for is that the borrowing and sharing will be done in a way that truly facilitates

spirituality and understanding; that appropriation of religious rituals and traditions will not be used to mislead those who are seeking religious identity and spiritual connection.

For Jews, this type of borrowing and appropriation is not a matter of theological integrity but rather of religious and cultural integrity. The need to draw clear lines about what is “Jewish” and what is “Not Jewish” is an ever present concern and necessity for Jews. As a religious and cultural minority everywhere except in Israel, Jewish communities are always under pressure by the dominant religion of the country in which they reside. The majority culture offers strong temptations to Jews. This has been true from the time of Abraham to the present. When incursions are made by the dominant culture into Jewish life and practices – the concept of a “Chanukkah bush” (Christmas tree in a Jewish home) for example, the stability and future of the Jewish community is threatened. Jews are constantly poised on a slippery slope between maintaining traditional values and beliefs and accommodating the pressures of the “modern” world in whatever form that may appear – religious influences, secular influences, new technologies.

This being said, all religions borrow from one another. The Canaanite god El became a God for the Israelites.⁴ During their sojourn in Babylonia after the destruction of the First Temple, the Israelites adopted the Babylonian calendar names for the names of the Jewish months. The Babylonian month of Nisanu, the first month of the year, becomes Nisan, the first month in the Jewish calendar. The last month, Addaru, becomes Adar, the last month of the Jewish year.⁵ The significant issue is not so much the fact that

⁴ John Day, *Yahweh and the Gods and Goddesses of Canaan*. Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplement Series 265. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2000, p. 37.

⁵ Babylonian Calendar. <http://www.webexhibits.org/calendars/calendar-ancient.html>. Accessed March 11, 2014.

borrowing happens but rather, that the religious impact of that borrowing can have unforeseen consequences. Some borrowing is benign. Some borrowing is subversive and harmful. It's not always possible to tell which is which and often only the passage of time can reveal the impact of borrowing on a religious/cultural community.

Large religious and cultural groups don't have to worry about religious borrowing because "losing" even a hundred thousand followers does not affect the stability of the group. The size of the Christian community worldwide today is approximately 2.1 billion. The size of the Muslim community is approximately 1.5 billion. There are approximately 900 million Hindus and 365 million Buddhists.⁶ The size of the world Jewish community today is approximately 13.75 million people, less than two tenths of one percent of the world population.⁷ There were approximately 15.3 million Jews in the world in 1933. Approximately 2/3 of the European Jewish community of 9.5 million people – approximately 6 million Jews - were exterminated during the Holocaust.⁸ The reverberation of that loss continues to this day. The loss of even one Jew to secularism or to a different religion is profound. This is because, when a single person is lost, all of the descendants of that person are also lost to the Jewish community. A famous statement in the Talmud explains:

For this reason was man created alone, to teach you that whosoever destroys a single soul of Israel, scripture imputes [guilt] to him as though he had destroyed a complete world; and whosoever preserves a single soul of Israel, scripture ascribes [merit] to him as though he had preserved a complete world.⁹

⁶ Religious adherents to world religions.

http://www.adherents.com/Religions_By_Adherents.html. Accessed Aug. 20, 2013.

⁷ Population statistics – Jewish community. <http://www.timesofisrael.com/jewish-population-grows-by-88000-over-past-year>. Accessed Aug. 20, 2013.

⁸ European Jewry statistics. <http://www.ushmm.org/wlc/en/article.php?ModuleId=10005161>. Accessed Aug. 20, 2013.

⁹ B. Sanhedrin 37a.

Actions that seem to threaten the Jewish community through assimilation or the blurring of lines between Judaism and other religions are an actual threat to the entire world wide Jewish community. This is not about theology; it is about the survival of the Jewish People. For me, providing a satisfying ritual for Christians based on the Passover Seder is a way of protecting Passover's integrity as a purely Jewish religious activity.

As I began to structure my project proposal, I sought out several Protestant ministers from various denominations, both male and female, to advise me and to provide input on appropriate Christian liturgy, rituals, texts and spirituality. I also added another rabbi to my Site Team. As I created and tested the project, other ministers and Christian lay leaders added their input. I also had the opportunity to “troubleshoot” the finalized liturgy with faculty and students at New York Theological Seminary.

The Last Supper Seder has been formally presented three times: at Woodbury Union Church (Presbyterian) in Warwick, Rhode Island with Reverend Beth Appel, (March, 2010,) at Park Avenue Christian Church, (affiliated with the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) and the United Church of Christ) New York City, with Reverend Alvin Jackson and Reverend Katherine Kinnamon (April 2010 – “official” presentation) and in April, 2012 at New York Temple Corps (Salvation Army) with Major Silvia Machado.

At the end of each program, participants were given the opportunity to offer feedback about the experience. The results of the feedback for the Warwick and New York presentations will be discussed in Chapter 6. On the whole, participants enjoyed the program, which was slightly different each time it was presented. The differences had to do primarily with the co-leaders and the musical selections.

Competencies

The competencies that I developed in 2008 were a true snapshot of my experience of the worlds of technology and Multifaith experience at that time. In my 2008 Multifaith cohort were four Christians – two Caucasians, a lay leader from Ghana and a lay leader with roots in Ghana – and me. I was the “Multifaith” in my year of the program. Of our professors, our Christian professors talked about Judaism, often incorrectly, and our rabbi wasn’t responsible for teaching us anything about Judaism. It was a very difficult and challenging year for me. Happily, the second year was better and I met another student from Ghana. Later I met a Buddhist priest doing work on repositioning the meaning of the swastika to its positive roots in Asian culture. I got pulled into programs presented by The Woman’s Center. My understanding of the new “Multifaith” world that I was hoping to inhabit was expanding in all types of ways.

The competency development process began with an overall description of the competencies necessary for a person pursuing a degree in Multifaith Ministry. These competencies were articulated by New York Theological Seminary. Some were not appropriate to a person who is first and foremost a rabbi planning to work primarily in the Jewish community. The edited list follows:

- Knowledge and appreciation of one’s own faith tradition.
- Knowledge and appreciation of the values of other faith traditions.
- Knowledge of the interaction between various faith traditions.
- Ability to engage productively in dialogue.
- Ability to interpret sacred text.
- Ability as worship leader.

- Use of social action to effect social change.
- Leadership ability.
- Ability to serve as a Multifaith religious educator.
- Ability as counselor in a Multifaith context.
- Grounding in personal spirituality.
- Role model for positive, life affirming values.
- Effective Administrator and Organizer.
- Professional in word and deed.

From the list of required competencies, the Doctor of Ministry student was directed to work with the student's Site Team to determine which competencies needed to be further developed. The following were the competencies that I identified with my Site Team for development as I began the Doctor of Ministry program and my notes for developing these competencies.

Knowledge of the sacred texts of other religious faiths:

A minister in a Multifaith context must have read and studied sacred texts of traditions other than her/his own. S/he should understand the fundamental "myths" and cultural assumptions of the faith traditions which arise from these texts.

Action: My project deals specifically with Christian spirituality, primarily that spirituality relating to Protestant denominations. During my rabbinic training, and as a rabbi, I have studied and worked with the New Testament, but never in depth, or in an "organized" way. I have purchased a New Testament NIV Study Bible and will be working my way through it to get a clearer idea of the way in which the material informs Christian faith.

Update: Since writing the “Action” statement above, I have read the New Testament with commentary and have discussed it with both Christian ministers and Christian laity. In addition, I have created a number of education modules for interfaith groups and for my college-level comparative religion students that draw from a wide variety of New Testament texts. I have also extensively studied the New Testament texts dealing with the Last Supper and the development of the Christian church in preparation for the writing of this thesis.

Knowledge of the history, traditions, and rituals of other faith traditions.

A minister in a Multifaith context should have a solid grounding in the religious history, traditions, and rituals of the faith communities (other than one’s own community) with which s/he works on an on-going basis.

Action: I will be doing extensive reading of Christian-oriented historical materials dealing with the formative early centuries of Christianity. My background in this area has been almost exclusively through Jewish sources. I will also be researching the Eucharist and its origins. In a Jewish Seder, the over-arching themes are redemptive and messianic (Jewish messianic). Through discussions with my Site Team and friends who are Christian, it has become apparent that there will need to be at least some Eucharistic elements in the ritual, although exactly how this will be played out is not clear to me at this time. In order to deal with this material, I need to be better educated about the development of the Eucharist, and the way in which it is celebrated today in a broad range of Christian denominations.

Update: Since writing the action statement above, I have not only read about Christianity, but have broadened my knowledge of Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism, Sikhism

and other religious traditions through reading, study and experiencing worship in a wide range of religious settings. I have taught a comparative religion course at Berkeley College six times since 2011 focusing on Judaism, Christianity, Islam, Hinduism and Buddhism. I have also been writing articles about Judaism for non-Jewish and Christian audiences. Some of these articles have appeared in “The Living Pulpit.”¹⁰ My trip to Ghana in 2009 opened me up to the fascinating world of African Traditional religions. I participated in a Multifaith mission during which we studied African spirituality, proverbs, and New Year’s rituals and documented on film the ritual of libation pouring which was another student’s Doctor of Ministry project.

In 2012, I presented a paper at a meeting of the International Society for the Study of African Jewry in Pietermaritzburg, South Africa and had the opportunity to visit Port Elizabeth as well. I also did extensive research on Creation Stories from Africa for my comparative religion classes. Berkeley attracts many African students and I have had excellent opportunities to speak with and learn from them. In addition, I have become active with Kulanu, a Jewish organization that works with small Jewish communities around the world. Several of these are in Africa. I have had the opportunity to meet with native African Jews from Uganda, Camaroon, Zimbabwe and Ghana and have met and spoken with a number of Lemba from South Africa and Zimbabwe. Because of these experiences, I have been able to introduce my students to a variety of African religious traditions and have studied the native traditions of other ethnic and racial groups as well. I have also been writing African proverbs since my trip to Ghana.

¹⁰ Rabbi Jo David, “*Gemilut Chasadim: Turning Deeds of Loving Kindness into Sacred Actions*,” *The Living Pulpit*, September, 2013; “Resurrection Through a Jewish Lens: O God! What Have You Done for Me Lately?” *The Living Pulpit*, April, 2012.

Competency with New Technologies

In today's world, facility with new technologies is a critical skill for anyone in ministry. The ability to use communications technologies with skill and comfort permits the minister to create closer contacts between congregants, staff, and the outside world. It also facilitates communication with younger members of the community. Knowledge of various technologies also offers the minister new creative tools for programming, outreach, in-reach, and generating feedback.

Action: There will be many people in many locations working on this liturgy. For this to be easy for everyone, a variety of new technologies will need to be employed. I will be working with the Site Team's IT expert to develop appropriate ways of communicating. I expect that this will involve the use of a website page similar to Moodle and web-based conferencing, at the very least.

Update: Since I wrote this action statement, the world of technology has changed in ways that were difficult to imagine in 2008. I have, in fact, mastered this competency in a variety of ways. As an adjunct professor at Berkeley College, I had to learn how to navigate Blackboard and use it creatively in my classes. I have taught several sections of various courses which had a strong "on line" component, and in the winter of 2013, I passed Berkeley's On Line training course so that I can now teach courses online as well as on site. I recently learned how to use document sharing programs so that I can teach my students how to collaborate more effectively on group projects.

For a talk that I gave at a conference in South Africa in June, 2012, I created my first power point presentation and now require all my students to become competent with what is today a basic communications vehicle. There is no longer any question about whether or not a professional working in the world today needs to be comfortable with

technology. The need to master and integrate new technology is a fundamental skill for everyone today.

The Site Team

Most students in the Doctor of Ministry Program had an actual placement – they worked in a particular community or in another place in which their project would be fielded. My situation was different. At the time that I began my work at New York Theological Seminary, I was not working in a synagogue. Also, the site of my project needed to be in a church. Because of these factors, my Site Team was drawn from a variety of ministers, lay leaders and rabbis who found the project interesting.

I recruited a “Liturgy Support Team” to help me work out the details of the Haggadah and its formatting. The team increased as we got closer to the actual presentation of the project. The starting team consisted of the following members:

Reverend Virginia McDaniel, United Church of Christ, Alachua, FL,

Reverend Dr. McDaniel is an ordained minister in the United Church of Christ with standing in the Presbyterian Church (USA). She received her Master of Divinity degree from Andover Newton Theological School (1994) and received her Doctor of Ministry Degree - Gospel and Culture) at Columbia Theological Seminary in 2010.

Reverend Thomas L. Schacher, First Presbyterian Church of East Hampton, NY

The Rev. Thomas L. Schacher graduated from the Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary in Louisville, Kentucky in 1994. He has served churches in

Arkansas, Ohio, Oklahoma and New York. At the time of this project, he was the pastor of the First Presbyterian Church of East Hampton, New York."

Rabbi Loraine Heller, New York City

Rabbi Heller is a graduate of Hebrew Union College, Jewish Institute of Religion and has an M.A. degree in English as a Second Language. She served as the rabbi/chaplain at the Jewish Home and Hospital for Aged in the Bronx for seven years, and as a teacher of English in the Ukraine as a Peace Corps volunteer. She is currently teaching English in Nanyang, China.

James Van Abbema, Bronx, New York – Internet and Web Support

Mr. Van Abbema is a computer programmer, website designer and professional editor. He has created numerous websites for religious organizations and clergy and is the chief architect of the website for the New York Turtle and Tortoise Society.

As the project developed, additional Site Team members were recruited.

Rev. Christine (Chris) Johnson Foster, Co-Pastor, Providence Presbyterian Church, Providence, Rhode Island.

Reverend Foster was a participant of the Multifaith Mission to Ghana in 2009-2010 and we became friendly. She joined the group because she has a significant number of immigrants from Ghana in her church. She is a graduate of San Francisco Theological Seminary, where she was ordained. She shared her community's Last Supper ritual with me. It is included in the Appendix.

Frankco Harris, President, Frankco's Academy for Music Education, New York

Franko Harris is a gifted singer/song leader who was a student at New York Theological Seminary when I met him and saw him in action. He was very helpful in suggesting Christian songs to include in the *Last Supper Seder*.

For Park Avenue Christian Church, New York City

Reverend Dr. Alvin O'Neal Jackson, Sr. Minister

Reverend Katherine Kinnamon, Associate Pastor

Paul Vasile, Minister of Music

James Gaynor, Member of Park Avenue Christian Church, Professional Editor
and thought leader.

For Woodbury Union Church, Presbyterian, Warwick, RI

Reverend Beth Appel, minister at Woodbury Union Church, Presbyterian since
2002. Master of Divinity from Princeton Theological Seminary.

Summary

As I was creating *A Last Supper Seder*, I was blessed with having a religiously and culturally diverse group of individuals with whom to work. My classmates, Reverend Dr. Daniel Nyante, the founder of TIDAC, The Institute for Diasporan and African Culture, Reverend Eva Shaw-Taylor, Reverend Cathy Surgenor, and Reverend Anesta Vannoy-Kwame, were all extremely supportive and helpful. Several of them attended the Park Avenue Christian Church Seder, and reviewed parts of the Haggadah. It was under the auspices of TIDAC that I made my life changing journey to Ghana.

One of the elements of working on *A Last Supper Seder* that was different from my experience in 1997, was the ability to take the time to reflect in a scholarly way on the historical development of the Seder and how it was molded into its present format. In order to understand the Seder, it is necessary to understand how and why Passover became one of the most important of the Jewish festivals. In Chapter 2, we will explore a variety of texts that reveal the fascinating origins and development of Passover.

Chapter 2 Reflections on the Origin of Passover

מה נשפנה הלילה הזה מכל הלילות?
“Why is This Night Different From All Other Nights?”¹¹

Judaism is a religion of questions rather than answers. This question, which is traditionally asked by the youngest person at the table during the annual Passover Seder, begins an in depth discussion of the meaning of Passover.

The term Passover (Pesach in Hebrew) is based on the Hebrew root Pey-Samech-Chet, which means “to pass through,” to “pass over,” or “to spare.” Thus the English term “Passover.” In the Tanach, of course, the term Pesach is used.

Textual Accounts of Passover and its Observance in Biblical and Early Post Biblical Times

The festival of Passover as a celebration of the Israelites’ flight to freedom seems to have its roots in two Canaanite springtime festivals: the Feast of Unleavened Bread (*Hag Hamatzot*),¹² a seven day festival (most likely a harvest festival) that takes place in the month of Aviv¹³ during which people eat unleavened bread for the entire seven days, and *Hag HaPesach*, (the Festival of Passover) a festival related to the ritual sacrifice of a

¹¹ Mishna Pesachim 10:4.

¹² Exodus 34:18.

¹³ March/April. The Jewish calendar is a lunar calendar that is adjusted over a 19 year cycle so that the various harvest festivals – Passover, Shavuot and Sukkot – fall during the proper seasons. Because a lunar year is 11 days shorter than a solar year, an additional month of 30 days is added to the Jewish calendar in the 3rd, 6th, 8th, 11th, 14th, 17th, and 19th years of each cycle. The additional month, Adar I is added a month prior to Nisan, the first year of the Jewish calendar. For more information: <http://www.jewfaq.org/calendar.htm>.

lamb. Two other terms that refer to this festival are Chag Ha'Aviv (the festival of Aviv) and Zeman Cheiruteinu (time of our freedom.).¹⁴

Hag Hamatzot is described in detail in the Book of Exodus beginning with Exodus 13:6-7:¹⁵

Seven days thou shalt eat unleavened bread, and in the seventh day shall be a feast to the LORD. Unleavened bread shall be eaten throughout the seven days; and there shall no leavened bread be seen with thee, neither shall there be leaven seen with thee, in all thy borders.

Hag Hamatzot is also referenced in Exodus 23:15:

The feast of unleavened bread shalt thou keep; seven days thou shalt eat unleavened bread, as I commanded thee, at the time appointed in the month Aviv. . . .

The third reference to Hag Hamatzot is found in Exodus 34:18:

The feast of unleavened bread shalt thou keep. Seven days thou shalt eat unleavened bread, as I commanded thee, at the time appointed in the month Aviv.

The discussion of the observance of Passover as a continuing religious observance by the Israelites during which a lamb is slaughtered and consumed is spelled out in detail in Chapter 12 of the Book of Exodus.

And the LORD spoke unto Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt, saying: 'This month shall be unto you the beginning of months; it shall be the first month of the year to you. Speak ye unto all the congregation of Israel,

¹⁴Names of Passover. <https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/Judaism/holidaya.html>. Accessed Nov. 10, 2103. The derivation of these terms is not clear. Chag Ha'Aviv is descriptive – the festival in the month of Aviv. Zeman Cheiruteinu – the time of our freedom – is a description and probably has a rabbinic or midrashic background, although I have not been able to find any material that speaks to the derivation of these two terms. However, it should be noted that all the Shalosh Regalim – three pilgrimage festivals, which are, after Shabbat, the most important festivals in the Jewish calendar, have a similar formulation. Passover is “Zeman Cheiruteinu” – season of our freedom. Shavuot, (Pentecost) which takes place 50 days after Passover is called “Zeman matan Torahteinu” – season of our being given the Torah,” and Sukkot, (Tabernacles) the fall harvest festival, is called “Zeman Simchateinu” – the season of our rejoicing. <http://www.sichosinenglish.org/books/vedibarta-bam/120.htm>.

¹⁵ The translation of Tanach follows JPS 1917, with necessary modifications, unless indicated otherwise.

saying: In the tenth day of this month they shall take to them every man a lamb, according to their fathers' houses, a lamb for a household; and if the household be too little for a lamb, then shall he and his neighbor next unto his house take one according to the number of the souls; according to every man's eating ye shall make your count for the lamb. Your lamb shall be without blemish, a male of the first year; ye shall take it from the sheep, or from the goats; and ye shall keep it until the fourteenth day of the same month; and the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill it at dusk. And they shall take of the blood, and put it on the two side-posts and on the lintel, upon the houses wherein they shall eat it. And they shall eat the flesh in that night, roast with fire, and unleavened bread; with bitter herbs they shall eat it. Eat not of it raw, nor sodden at all with water, but roast with fire; its head with its legs and with the inwards thereof. And ye shall let nothing of it remain until the morning; but that which remains of it until the morning ye shall burn with fire. And thus shall ye eat it: with your loins girded, your shoes on your feet, and your staff in your hand; and ye shall eat it in haste—it is the LORD'S Passover (Pesach).¹⁶

The description continues in verse 14:

And this day shall be unto you for a memorial, and you shall keep it a feast to the LORD; throughout your generations you shall keep it a feast by an ordinance forever. Seven days shall you eat unleavened bread; howbeit the first day you shall put away leaven out of your houses; for whosoever eats leavened bread from the first day until the seventh day, that soul shall be cut off from Israel. And in the first day there shall be to you a holy convocation, and in the seventh day a holy convocation; no manner of work shall be done in them, save that which every man must eat, that only may be done by you. And you shall observe the feast of unleavened bread; for in this selfsame day have I brought your hosts out of the land of Egypt; therefore shall you observe this day throughout your generations by an ordinance forever. In the first, month, on the fourteenth day of the month at even, you shall eat unleavened bread, until the one and twentieth day of the month at even. Seven days shall there be no leaven found in your houses; for whosoever eats that which is leavened, that soul shall be cut off from the congregation of Israel, whether he be a sojourner, or one that is born in the land. You shall eat nothing leavened; in all your habitations shall ye eat unleavened bread (Exodus 12:14-20).

The term *Hag HaPesach* (the feast of Passover) as applied to this festival appears in Exodus 34:25:

¹⁶ Exodus 12:1-11. A similar statement is found in Leviticus 23:5. "In the first month, on the 14th day of the month, at twilight, there will be a Pesach offering to the Lord."

לֹא-תִשְׁחַט עַל-תֹּמֶז, דָּם-זִבְחִי; וְלֹא-יָלִין לִבָּקָר, זִבְחַת מִגַּד הַפֶּסַח.

You shalt not offer the blood of My sacrifice with leavened bread; neither shall the sacrifice of the feast of the passover be left unto the morning.

The reframing of these two ancient spring festivals into an historical commemoration of the Israelites' liberation from slavery is first presented in Exodus 12:12-14:

For I will go through the land of Egypt in that night, and will smite all the first-born in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgments: I am the LORD. And the blood shall be to you for a token upon the houses where ye are; and when I see the blood, I will pass over you, and there shall no plague be upon you to destroy you, when I smite the land of Egypt. And this day shall be unto you for a memorial, and ye shall keep it a feast to the LORD; throughout your generations ye shall keep it a feast by an ordinance forever.

The historical overlay of the Exodus experience is cleverly woven throughout the Biblical discussion of the ancient festivals of Hag HaMatzot and Hag HaPesaach. A close textual reading is necessary to separate the three distinct narratives. In fact, over time, a deep understanding of the original festivals has faded as the mythos of Passover as the “festival of freedom” has overtaken the original spring agricultural rituals. Today, even knowledgeable Jews, if asked about the background of the Passover festival will almost certainly cite the Exodus from Egypt as the central catalyst for the holiday.

There is ample evidence that the festival of Passover was celebrated after the Israelites crossed the Jordan River under Joshua's leadership. In Joshua 5:10-11 we read:

And the children of Israel encamped in Gilgal; and they kept the passover on the fourteenth day of the month at even in the plains of Jericho. And they did eat of the produce of the land on the morrow after the passover, unleavened cakes and parched corn, in the selfsame day.

According to the Book of 2 Kings, the national Passover observance was instituted during the reign of King Josiah. This was in line with other religious reforms/revivals that were undertaken under Josiah's reign. Most notable of these was the

“discovery” of the Book of Deuteronomy. In 2 Kings 23:21-23, we read about Josiah’s

Passover observance:

And the king commanded all the people, saying: 'Keep the passover unto the LORD your God, as it is written in this book of the covenant.' For there was not kept such a passover from the days of the judges that judged Israel, nor in all the days of the kings of Israel, nor of the kings of Judah; but in the eighteenth year of king Josiah was this passover kept to the LORD in Jerusalem.

Passover is not only a festival during which unleavened bread is eaten. It is also a pilgrimage festival. In chapter 16 of Deuteronomy, a description of Passover and its sacrificial rituals is clearly presented. The two other harvest festivals, Hag HaShavuot (Festival of Weeks) which takes place seven weeks after the first night of Passover, and Hag HaSukkot (Festival of Booths, sometimes called the Festival of Tabernacles)¹⁷ are also described. All three festivals are tied to the exodus experience of the Israelites.

Verses 16–17 describe all three of these ritual observances as pilgrimage festivals:

Three times in a year shall all thy males appear before the LORD thy God in the place which He shall choose; on the feast of unleavened bread, and on the feast of weeks, and on the feast of tabernacles; and they shall not appear before the LORD empty; every man shall give as he is able, according to the blessing of the LORD thy God which He hath given thee.

There is also a reference to the three festivals as having a pilgrimage component in chapter 34 of Exodus 34:18-23:

The feast of unleavened bread shalt thou keep. Seven days thou shalt eat unleavened bread, as I commanded thee, at the time appointed in the month Avib, for in the month Avib thou camest out from Egypt. All that openeth the womb is Mine; and of all thy cattle thou shalt sanctify the males, the firstlings of ox and sheep. And the firstling of an ass thou shalt

¹⁷ This is a mistranslation which can be confusing. The Tabernacle referred to in the Torah was a portable dwelling for God and for the worship of God. The Israelites dwelt in temporary shelters, not in the Tabernacle. The term “tabernacle” comes into use in Middle English at some point between 1350 – 1400 C.E. Feast of Tabernacles. Dictionary.com. *Dictionary.com Unabridged*. Random House, Inc. <http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/Feast of Tabernacles>. Accessed: September 26, 2013.

redeem with a lamb; and if thou wilt not redeem it, then thou shalt break its neck. All the first-born of thy sons thou shalt redeem. And none shall appear before Me empty. Six days thou shalt work, but on the seventh day thou shalt rest; in plowing time and in harvest thou shalt rest. And thou shalt observe the feast of weeks, even of the first-fruits of wheat harvest, and the feast of ingathering at the turn of the year. Three times in the year shall all thy males appear before the Lord GOD, the God of Israel.

Evidence of the celebration of Passover outside the land of Israel is found in extra-Biblical texts as early as 419 B.C.E. The Passover Papyrus, a fragmentary document which was part of material discovered in an excavation of the Elephantine community is dated to 419 B.C.E.¹⁸ Written in Aramaic, this document seems to be a letter which describes traditional aspects of Passover observance although the word “Passover” is not part of the letter. The specific text that points to this letter as being about Passover are statements about not eating leavened bread and not drinking anything that is fermented. The dating of the festival from the 14th – 21st of the month is another indicator that the festival in question is Passover.¹⁹

Another early post-Biblical source attesting to the observance of Passover is Chapter 49 of the pseudegraphical Book of Jubilees which describes a very authentic observance of the Passover ritual.²⁰ The Book of Jubilees was written in Hebrew around 200 B.C.E. It reiterates and expands on the Torah text starting with Creation.²¹ It should be noted that although the Books of the Apocrypha and the Pseudepigrapha are Jewish

¹⁸ Bezalel Porten, *The Elephantine Papyri in English; Three Millennia of Cross-Cultural Continuity and Change*, 2nd ed., Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 1996.

¹⁹ A picture of the Passover Papyrus and a translation of the text appear in the Addendum to this thesis. The “Passover Papyrus” is part of the communal archive of Yedaniah ben Gemariah. It was discovered in 1907–1908 by German archaeologists Otto Rubensohn and Friedrich Zucker. The translation was published by Eduard Sachau in 1911. The document is part of the collection in Die Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Germany.

²⁰ Chapter 49, Book of Jubilees, translated by R.H. Charles, *Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament in English*, 1913; Scanned and edited by Joshua Williams, Northwest Nazarene College. <http://www.pseudepigrapha.com/jubilees/49.htm>. Accessed Sept. 2, 2013.

²¹ Book of Jubilees. <http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsourc/Judaism/apocrypha.html>, Accessed Sept. 2, 2013.

works written between approximately 400 B.C.E. and 100 C.E., they were not included in the Hebrew Biblical canon. Because of this, these books were not studied, until very recently, in Jewish scholarly communities.

We find Passover referenced extensively in the writings of the great Alexandrian Jew, Philo Judaeus (20 B.C.E.- 50 C.E.). In *De specialibus legibus*, Philo discusses what he refers to as the Fourth, Fifth, and Sixth Festivals, all of which are aspects of Passover.²²

Josephus, that problematic first century “historian” mentions Passover in “The Wars of the Jews” and in “Antiquities of the Jews.” His description of the Passover festival in “Wars” testifies to the important nature of Passover as a pilgrimage festival in the first century of the Common Era. He writes:

The number of sacrifices was two hundred and fifty-six thousand five hundred; which, upon the allowance of no more than ten that feast together, amounts to two millions seven hundred thousand and two hundred persons that were pure and holy.²³

In Book V, Josephus relates the background of Passover, proving that the Biblical account of the festival was well known in the first century.

the feast of unleavened bread, which was now come, it being the fourteenth day of the month Xanthicus, [Nisan,] when it is believed the Jews were first freed from the Egyptians. . . .²⁴

An interesting comment by Josephus in Book I of *Wars* concerns the ever-rebellious Jews and has a link to the story of the Last Supper. Josephus writes of the

²²Philo – texts. <http://www.earlyjewishwritings.com/text/philo/book28.html>; and <http://www.bibleresearch.org/observancebook5/b5w43.html>. Accessed Sept. 3, 2013.

²³ Josephus. *Wars of the Jews*, 6.9.3; <http://www.sacred-texts.com/jud/josephus/war-6.htm>. Accessed Sept. 4, 2013.

²⁴ Ibid. 5.3.1; <http://www.sacred-texts.com/jud/josephus/war-5.htm>. Accessed Sept. 4, 2013.

various machinations of Alexander Janneus and explains that he enslaved the populations of the countries that he conquered. Josephus comments about the Jewish response to this:

When he had made slaves of the citizens of all these cities, the nation of the Jews made an insurrection against him at a festival; for at those feasts seditions are generally begun.²⁵

Josephus' work, *Antiquities of the Jews*, records a specific incident that took place during Sukkot during which the Jews in the Temple responded explosively to Alexander Janneus' attempt to make a sacrifice in the Temple. A similar incident is recorded in the Mishna.²⁶

As to Alexander, his own people were seditious against him; for at a festival which was then celebrated, when he stood upon the altar, and was going to sacrifice, the nation rose upon him, and pelted him with citrons [which they then had in their hands, because] the law of the Jews required that at the feast of tabernacles everyone should have branches of the palm tree and citron tree; which thing we have elsewhere related.²⁷

The Haggadah: The Passover Seder “Bible”

Passover is the most celebrated of Jewish festivals.²⁸ One possible reason for this is that it is a home-based festival. Although there are hundreds of rules about how one is to observe Passover, both at home and in the synagogue, the setting of the Seder (the ritual meal associated with Passover) in the home rather than in the synagogue accommodates a wide range of religious practice. Without the oversight of a “ritual

²⁵ Ibid. 1.4.3; <http://www.sacred-texts.com/jud/josephus/war-1.htm>. Accessed Sept. 4, 2013.

²⁶ Mishna Sukkah 4:9 – “For it once happened that someone [a Sadducee priest whose sect did not believe in the rite of pouring water] poured [out the water] over his feet and all the people pelted him with their etrogim.” An etrog is a citrus fruit that is used ritually during the Sukkot festival.

²⁷ Josephus, *Antiquities of the Jews*, 13.13.5; <http://www.sacred-texts.com/jud/josephus/ant-13.htm>; http://cojs.org/cojswiki/Josephus,_Antiquities_XIII,_356-83:_The_Reign_of_Alexander_Janneus. Accessed Sept. 4, 2013.

²⁸ According the 2001 National Jewish Population Survey (the most recent survey of its kind in the United States) 77% of those participating in the survey (over 4500 Jews) said that they performed or participated in some sort of Passover Seder. <http://www.jewishfederations.org/page.aspx?id=33650>, page 7. Accessed Sept. 4, 2013.

committee,” which one would find in a synagogue, each family can choose its own observance of the holiday.

The “guidebook” for the Seder is the Passover Haggadah. The Hebrew word “Haggadah” is derived from the Hebrew root meaning “to tell,” or “to narrate.” The Passover Haggadah contains the liturgy, in the proper order, needed to conduct a Passover Seder. The multitude of modern Haggadot (plural of Haggadah) covers everything from the most traditional to the most liberal presentation of the Passover story.

The Seder (order) is a series of rituals incorporated into an elaborate evening meal. These rituals have their origin in the Biblical Book of Exodus and are relatively simple, although certain aspects of the original ritual (like the slaughtering of the animals) are no longer universally practiced.

Tell the whole community of Israel that on the tenth day of this month each man is to take a lamb for his family, one for each household. If any household is too small for a whole lamb, they must share one with their nearest neighbor, having taken into account the number of people there are. You are to determine the amount of lamb needed in accordance with what each person will eat. The animals you choose must be year-old males without defect, and you may take them from the sheep or the goats. Take care of them until the fourteenth day of the month, when all the members of the community of Israel must slaughter them at twilight. Then they are to take some of the blood and put it on the sides and tops of the doorframes of the houses where they eat the lambs. That same night they are to eat the meat roasted over the fire, along with bitter herbs, and bread made without yeast. Do not eat the meat raw or boiled in water, but roast it over a fire—with the head, legs and internal organs. Do not leave any of it till morning; if some is left till morning, you must burn it. This is how you are to eat it: with your cloak tucked into your belt, your sandals on your feet and your staff in your hand. Eat it in haste; it is the LORD’s Passover. Obey these instructions as a lasting ordinance for you and your descendants. When you enter the land that the LORD will give you as he promised, observe this ceremony. And when your children ask you, ‘What does this ceremony mean to you?’ then tell them, ‘It is the Passover sacrifice to the LORD, who passed over the houses of the Israelites in Egypt and spared our homes when he struck down the Egyptians (Exodus 12:3-11, 24-27).

The destruction of the Second Temple in Jerusalem in 70 C.E. necessitated a shift from Temple-based Passover cultic offerings to rituals that could be performed in the home. Over the centuries, these home rituals developed, serving as a focus for both rabbinic legal creativity and Jewish lay ritual and artistic innovation. The journeys of the Jews and their experiences of the world created an indelible imprint on the rituals and liturgy of the Passover Seder that has continued to the present day. The expulsion of the Jewish communities from Spain and Portugal, the blood libels of Eastern Europe, pogroms, new settlements of Jews in Israel in the 19th century, the Holocaust, the establishment of the modern State of Israel, the evolving social consciousness of the American Jewish community have all contributed to the rich experience of the modern Seder.

It is this very complexity that led to the development of a written guide to the Seder for home use. A written outline of the Seder rituals developed over time. Statements from the Torah, the Mishna, the Tosefta and the Talmud gave the Seder its earliest form. While it is not clear exactly when a complete written ritual for the Seder was first developed, there is evidence that by the 7th or 8th century C.E., a separate written work was being developed by the Geonim.²⁹ The earliest such material that has been found to date is found in the siddur (prayer book) of the great 10th century Saadiah Gaon.³⁰ Other early versions of prototype Haggadot (plural for Haggadah) were found in

²⁹ The term “Gaon” (Geonim – plural) was the title given to the heads of the great Babylonian houses of learning in Sura and Pumbedita (modern Iran) between the later 6th century C.E. and the mid 11th century. It was in these academies that the Talmud was crafted and that modern rabbinic Judaism began to take shape.

³⁰ Haggadah, Passover, Jewish Virtual Library, http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/judaica/ejud_0002_0008_0_08144.html. Accessed Sept. 4, 2013.

the Mahzor Vitry³¹ (11th century) and in Maimonides' Mishneh Torah (12th century.) The earliest evidence of material intended for a separate book specifically for the Passover Seder was found in the Cairo Genizah.³²

The first completely separate surviving Haggadot are from the 13th – 14th centuries. These Haggadot come from three different Jewish traditions: Sephardic, Ashkenazic and Italian.³³ These Haggadot are handwritten manuscripts that are beautifully illustrated and illuminated. The earliest confirmed date of the printing of a Haggadah is the “Soncino Haggadah” printed by Joshua Solomon ben Israel Nathan in Soncino, Lombardy in 1486.³⁴ Today, the Haggadah is the most published of traditional Jewish texts after the Hebrew Bible. Each year, new editions of the Haggadah are produced.³⁵

The complete traditional Hebrew text of the Haggadah has been set since the middle ages and is based on the ritual performance of the 14 or 15 steps. (This will be

³¹ The Mahzor Virtry was written by Simhah ben Samuel of Virtry in the 11th century. (Virtry was a small town in the area of Marne, France.) The author was part of the circle surrounding the great scholar Rashi (Rabbi Solomon Yitzhaki) who lived in Troyes, France, an ancient city about 93 miles southeast of Paris.

³² There is a rabbinic law against the destruction of anything that contains God’s name. A Torah scroll that becomes “pasul” (ritually unusable in such a way that it cannot be restored to a usable condition) is traditionally buried in a Jewish cemetery. The prohibition against destroying something with God’s name includes any written document or book. Over time, Jewish communities developed a variety of ways in which to observe this law. Some communities maintained a special crypt in a Jewish cemetery in which such documents and books would be buried. Other communities designated a particular place where these materials were gathered. The Hebrew word “genizah” means “hiding place. The Cairo Geniza is the best known of these genizot because of the richness of the material discovered there. The genizah was part of the Ezra Synagogue in Fostat, Egypt. The synagogue was built in 882. There were references to this treasure trove prior to its “discovery” in 1896 by the great scholar, Solomon Schechter.

³³ The Sephardic tradition reflects the customs of Jews from Spanish and Portuguese speaking Jewish communities. The Ashkenazic tradition reflects the customs of Jews from Eastern Europe. The Italian Jewish tradition is a unique set of customs, liturgies and rituals going back over 2000 years to the time before the destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem.

³⁴Cambridge Digital Library <http://cudl.lib.cam.ac.uk/collections/genizah>. Accessed Sept. 4, 2013.

³⁵ It was impossible to find an appropriate scholarly reference for this statement. Most articles that commented on the popularity of the Haggadah used words like “ubiquitous,” “popular” or “beloved.” However, all sources agree that the Jewish public’s appetite for new editions of the Haggadah create a fertile market for new editions.

discussed in Chapter 3). However, as with the development of the siddur, to which additional readings were incorporated over time, the “subtext” of the Haggadah as grown as world events and local events impacted the Jewish community. The next chapter will deal with the basic framework of the Haggadah and will discuss the ways in which the Haggadah developed.

Chapter 3 The Seder and the Haggadah

Introduction

The Hebrew word “Seder” is based on the root samech daled resh which has the basic meaning of “order.”³⁶ This is the same root that is the basis of the Hebrew word for “prayer book” – “siddur.” In both cases, the understanding of the words is that they provide an ordered presentation of specific material. In the case of the siddur, it is an ordered arrangement of worship liturgy. In the case of the Seder, it is an ordered ritual that is different from traditional worship liturgy.

The term “Seder” was originally used exclusively for the ordered Passover ritual. However, the term “Seder” has been applied to other rituals in more recent times. In the 16th Century, Rabbi Isaac Luria of Safed created a Kabbalistic Seder for Tu b’Shevat which celebrated the Tree of Life (the Kabbalistic depiction of the relationship between earth and heaven, humans and God. This Seder, *the Pri Etz Hadar*,³⁷ (“The Fruit of the Goodly Tree”) was first printed in Venice in 1728 as part of the “Hemdat Yamim,”³⁸ an early, anonymous work combining homiletics and ethics which was heavily influenced by the Kabbalists of Safed. Although the Tu B’Shevat Seder was celebrated in Sephardic

³⁶ Ehud Ben-Yehuda, David Weinstein, eds. *Ben-Yehuda’s Pocket English-Hebrew Hebrew-English Dictionary*. New York: Pocket Books, 1964, p. 218.

³⁷ The Original Tu B’Shvat Seder: 'Pri Etz Hadar' by Jonathan Brumberg-Kraus <http://blogs.forward.com/the-jew-and-the-carrot/134842/the-original-tu-b-shvat-Seder-pri-etz-hadar> January 20, 2011, 10:35am. Accessed 12/2/13.

³⁸ Pri Etz Hadar. <http://vjweb.cloudapp.net/Listing/Details/504562/Mishmeret-haTohorah> Accessed December 2, 2013.

communities, it was not part of the Ashkenazic world until the late 20th century when Kabbalah began to be more accepted by both Sephardic and Ashkenazic communities in Israel and in mainstream American Jewish communities.³⁹ Today, a Tu B'Shevat Seder is an annual feature in the programming of most movement religious schools and in Jewish Community Centers.

The Tu B'Shevat Seder has its own structure. The term *Seder* is used merely to signal that this is a non-synagogue ritual that follows a prescribed order. The Passover Seder also has its own specific internal logic.

The Passover Seder has two distinct parts: the exploration of Yitziat Mitzrayim – the “going out” of Egypt – and the expression of gratitude. In addition, it has an overarching messianic message.

The Seder

The term “Mitzrayim,” while usually translated as “Egypt,” is also sometimes translated as “a narrow place.” The actual meaning of this word is uncertain.⁴⁰ However, the concept of Egypt, the place in which Jews were enslaved, as a “narrow place” is widely taught because of the many midrashic opportunities this translation offers. Perhaps the most popular has to do with the “birthing” of the Jewish people. God brings the Israelites out of Egypt (the narrow place) with a mighty hand, so that the nation of Israel can be born.

³⁹ Tu B'Shevat.

http://www.myjewishlearning.com/holidays/Jewish_Holidays/Tu_Bishvat/Practices/Modern_Seder/Kabbalistic_Seder_Part_1.shtml. Accessed Dec. 21, 2013.

⁴⁰ Mitzrayim – derivation. <http://www.bala-shon.com/2009/03/mitzrayim.html>. Accessed December 21, 2013.

The first part of the Seder – the telling of the story of the Exodus and the accompanying rituals which include the dipping of bitter herbs in salt water and the drinking of two cups of wine – also includes midrashic commentary, the chanting of the first part of Hallel, and readings lifted directly from the Torah. This part of the Seder is followed by a meal.

The second part of the Seder is initiated with the redeeming of the Afikomen, a piece of Matzah that was set aside and then hidden during the first part of the Seder. After the Afikomen has been eaten, the Grace After Meals is chanted. This is followed by the conclusion of Hallel - the singing of hymns of praise - the drinking of two additional cups of wine, the singing of traditional songs, and the conclusion of the Seder.

The Passover Seder is first and foremost about redemption: the redemption of the Israelites from physical and spiritual slavery in Egypt and the ongoing act of redeeming of the world through the performance of the covenantal mitzvot (commandments.) A term for Passover, Zeman Cheiruteinu - the season of our freedom – was inserted into the Passover festival kiddush during the Geonic Period (650-1075).⁴¹ This term is also connected to the following statement in the Haggadah:

In every generation, each individual should feel as though he or she had actually been redeemed from Mitzrayim, as it is said, ‘You shall tell your children on that day saying, It is because of what Adonai did for me when I went free from Mitzrayim.’ (Exodus 13:8) For the Holy One redeemed not only our ancestors; He redeemed us with them, as it is said, ‘He brought us out of there so that He might bring us to the land He promised our ancestors (Deut. 6:23).’⁴²

⁴¹ Jacob Freedman, D.D. *Polychrome Historical Haggadah for Passover*. Springfield; Jacob Freedman Liturgy Research Foundation, 1974, p. 10.

⁴² *Passover Haggadah: The Feast of Freedom*, ed. Rachel Anne Rabinowicz, 2nd ed., New York; The Rabbinical Assembly, 1982, p. 67. (Referred to as *Feast of Freedom* hereafter).

It is the concept of *l'dor va dor* – from generation to generation – that is at the heart of the concept of the ongoing responsibility of the Jewish people to work for the world's redemption.

The Seder also has an overarching Messianic theme that is presented in a variety of ways depending on the religious and spiritual orientation of the family conducting the Seder. In Orthodox and Lubovitch circles, the Messianic themes are often more dominant than in Seders conducted by more liberal or secular Jews. This has to do with the way in which the study of Kabbala and the Messianic hopes of the Lubovitch community in particular have intersected in the last thirty years or so.

In the Jewish world, Messianism has always been a very dangerous issue. In Christian Europe in particular, Jews were careful to frame prayers for the coming of the (Jewish) Messiah in oblique language. In the Eighteen Benedictions, for example, which are recited three times a day during the weekdays, references to the Messiah are couched in phrases like *tzemach David* – seed of David, and in the prayer for the restoration of the *kisey David* – the throne of David in a rebuilt Jerusalem.⁴³

The most striking example of this cautiousness is in the structure of the Mourner's Kaddish which is the final prayer in every Jewish worship service. The prayer is written in Aramaic and is a doxology. However, the last sentence, "Oseh shalom bimromav hu ya'aseh shalom aleinu v'al kol Yisrael" – May the One who makes peace on high make peace for us and for all Israel – is written in Hebrew. Jews hearing this prayer understand that the request is for a peace which will bring an end to death in the world. This is what

⁴³ Joseph H. Hertz, *The Authorized Daily Prayer Book, Revised Edition*. New York; Bloch Publishing Company, 1975, pp. 145-147.

we expect to happen when the Jewish Messiah comes.⁴⁴ The appearance of the last line of the Mourner's Kaddish in Hebrew is a type of "code" to let Jewish worshippers know that this is a specific prayer for the coming of the Jewish Messiah.⁴⁵

The Messianism in a "mainstream" Seder is similarly coded. The most well-known symbol of the Seder's Messianic theme is the cup for Elijah which sits on every Seder table. Elijah is understood in Judaism to be one who will announce the coming of the Messiah. This is based on the Book of Malachi which states,

I will send the prophet Elijah to you before the coming of the awesome, fearful Day of the Lord. He shall reconcile parents with children and children with their parents so that when I come I do not strike the whole land with utter destruction (Malachi 3:23-24).

Elijah is referenced at the close of each Shabbat and is given a special chair at the *brit milah* (ritual circumcision) of a Jewish male infant. His inclusion at Passover is an unvoiced wish that he will appear and announce the coming of the Messiah. Although it is not stated in this way in the Haggadah, the Torah makes it clear that the redemption of the Israelites from Egypt is only a partial redemption. The text in Exodus 12:42 explains, "This same night is a night of watching unto the Lord for all the children of Israel throughout their generations." "Throughout their generations" is understood to mean that the messianic redemption of the world is yet to come.

There are other allusions to the messianic hopes of the Jewish people in the Seder.

⁴⁴ For a basic introduction to Jewish Messianism, see <http://www.jewfaq.org/mashiach.htm>. Accessed Sept. 4, 2013.

⁴⁵ The subject of Jewish Messianism is extremely complicated and not the focus of this dissertation. The teaching here about the Kaddish and the final sentence in Hebrew is my own contribution to explaining the meaning and importance of this prayer. Not even Elbogen explores this odd ending to this important prayer. (Ismar Elbogen, *Jewish Liturgy: A Comprehensive History*, Raymond P. Scheindlin, Raymond, trans., Philadelphia; Jewish Publication Society, 1993.

In the Seder, the Hallel is recited in an unusual way.⁴⁶ Rather than chanting Hallel as a single unit, which follows the normal liturgical pattern, the Psalms are split into two parts. Part 1 – Psalms 113 and 114 are chanted after the section in which the Matzah and the bitter herbs are discussed and just prior to the drinking of the second cup of wine.⁴⁷ Part 2 of Hallel, Psalms 115 – 118 - are chanted after the blessing after the meal, the drinking of the third cup of wine and the ritual of opening the door for Elijah.⁴⁸ This unusual division underscores the difference between the redemption of the Israelites – Part 1 – and future messianic redemption of the world which is to come.

When one participates in the Seder, one fulfills a number of different mitzvot commandments.⁴⁹ Some of the mitzvot are *d'oreita* – from the Torah. For example, the commandment to keep Passover in every generation is *d'oreita*.

And this day shall be unto you for a memorial, and ye shall keep it a feast to the LORD; throughout your generations ye shall keep it a feast by an ordinance forever (Exodus 12:14).

Other laws, like how much matzah one must eat during the Seder, are a *mitzvah d'rabbanan* – created by the rabbis.⁵⁰ Actually, this is a combined mitzvah; to eat the Matzah is *d'oreita*. The amount that fulfills that commandment is *d'rabbanan*. (The

⁴⁶ The Hallel is a group of Psalms – 113-118 that are usually chanted in the synagogue after the Shemoneh Esray (the 18 Benedictions which are part of the normal synagogue service) but only on the harvest festivals of Passover, Shavuot and Sukkot, on Chanukkah and every month on Rosh Chodesh (new moon festival.) There are some variations in the text on certain holidays. However, what is significant is that the psalms of Hallel are always said as a single unit except for when Hallel is chanted during the Passover Seder.

⁴⁷ *Feast of Freedom*, pp. 68-71.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 106-113.

⁴⁹ According to Jewish law, there are 613 mitzvot that are articulated in the Torah. The term for these commandments is “d’oreita” – according to the Torah. There are also literally thousands of mitzvot intuited by the rabbis based on texts in the Torah and the Tanach. The mitzvot of the rabbis are labeled “mitzvot d’rabbanan” – mitzvot of the rabbis. Jews are expected to perform all these mitzvot, however, the mitzvot d’rabbanan are understood to be less sacred than the mitzvot d’oreita.

⁵⁰ Laws of Passover. <http://www.halachipedia.com/index.php?title=Kezayit#Kezayit>. Accessed September 10, 2013.

amount one must eat when fulfilling the mitzvah for eating Matzah is approximately 1.3 ounces).⁵¹

In some Jewish circles, the performance of mitzvot is linked to hastening the coming of the Messiah.⁵² The fact that there is an expectation that the coming of the Messiah will be announced on the night of the Seder by Elijah the Prophet has already been noted. Because of this underlying Messianic theme, the actual performance of the Seder can be seen as behavior oriented toward hastening the coming of the Messiah. This is sometimes referred to as “messianic behavior.” Whether acknowledged or not, this active messianic behavior is an important underlying dynamic in the Passover Seder.

Outline of the Haggadah

The Haggadah provides the ritual steps and liturgy for the Passover Seder. Depending on one’s tradition, there are fourteen or fifteen steps in the Seder. Here is the 15 step outline:⁵³

1. Kaddesh: Sanctification
2. Urchatz: Washing
3. Karpas: Vegetable
4. Yachatz: Breaking
5. Maggid: The Story
6. Rachtzah: Washing
7. Motzi: Blessing over Grain Products

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² Jewish Messianism. <http://www.jewfaq.org/mashiach.htm>; also <http://www.aish.com/f/rf/48942286.html> and <http://judaism.stackexchange.com/questions/28682/do-a-mitzva-for-mashiach>. Accessed Sept. 10, 2013.

⁵³ The Pesach Seder. <http://www.jewfaq.org/holidaya.htm>. Accessed Dec. 8, 2013.

8. Matzah: Blessing over Matzah
9. Maror: Bitter Herbs
10. Korekh: The Sandwich
11. Shulchan Orekh: Dinner
12. Tzafun: The Afikomen
13. Barekh: Grace after Meals
14. Hallel: Praises
15. Nirtzah: Closing

The difference between the 15 Step Seder and the 14 Step Seder is that in the shorter order steps 7 and 8 – Motzi and Matzah – are combined into one step. One of the possible reasons for combining Motzi and Matzah is that the blessing “motzi” is the blessing over bread. This is a very important blessing of appreciation. Once this prayer is said, any type of food may be eaten. In addition, saying the motzi obligates one to say the blessing after meals. None of the other blessings over food are as comprehensive.⁵⁴

The blessing of the Matzah is a blessing in which thanks is given for the commandment to say the blessing over Matzah. The blessing over Matzah is a limited blessing – limited to Matzah. This makes it a less important blessing than the motzi – the blessing over bread. Thus, in some Haggadot the steps – Motzi and Matzah - are combined, especially because the two blessings are said consecutively and the action associated with the motzi – the eating of the bread – in this case the matzah – is not performed until the blessing over Matzah is recited.

⁵⁴ The details of halacha regarding the saying of blessings is extremely complicated. For basic information see http://home.comcast.net/~judaism/Siddur/transliterations/daily/ber_eating.htm. Accessed Dec. 8, 2013.

Haggadot that are edited within a more Kabbalistic/mystical tradition view these two steps as separate because of the mystical impact of the numbers 14 and 15. One approach to the understanding of these numbers is through the practice of Jewish numerology which is called “gematria.”

There are a number of different systems of gematria. However, the basis of all gematria is the understanding that all Hebrew letters have a corresponding Hebrew number. For example, in the simplest type of gematria system, aleph, the first letter of the Hebrew alphabet is equivalent to the number 1. Using this type of system, every word can be reduced to a numerical component. Gematria reduces words to numerical components and then looks a different words that have the same numerical equivalent. There are many different uses for this technique, one of which is to seek hidden meanings in the Torah.⁵⁵

In the case of the Haggadah, the number 14 can be expressed as the letters yud (10) and daled (4). Yud-daled is a word that can be understood as “yad” meaning “hand.”⁵⁶ One mystical understanding of the word “yad” (14) is that it is the hand of the Holy One who took the Israelites out of Egypt. Therefore, having 14 steps in the Seder is a literal celebration of the action of the hand of the Holy One.

The number 15, on the other hand, can be mystically linked to sacred objects and manifestations of the sacred that also equal the number 15. For example, there were 15 steps on the west end of the Women’s Court in the Temple in Jerusalem. These steps led up to the Nicanor Gate. It was here that the Levites would gather and sing. During

⁵⁵ Gematria. <http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/gematria?r=66>. Accessed December 14, 2013.

⁵⁶ There is no numerical equivalent for vowels that are not letters. For example, the vowel “o” can be expressed by the letter *vav*. Therefore, when it appears in a word, its numerical equivalent – 6- would be used. However, the vowel “ah” is represented by one of several symbols and has no numerical equivalent.

Sukkot, the most important holy day during Temple times, the Levites would chant the 15 *Shir HaMa'alot* – the Psalms of Ascent – Psalms 120-134.⁵⁷ From a mystical standpoint, the ordering of the Seder into 15 steps is a way for participants to ascend the Temple steps.

The fact that the Seder is performed at home makes it possible for these ritual variations to exist. There is no synagogue ritual committee (other than participants in the Seder) to object. And in truth, whether the Seder is seen as a series of 14 or 15 steps, the actual performance of the ritual acts remains the same. In the next section of this chapter we will be looking at a more detailed outline of the steps of the Seder and will be discussing some of the halachic and cultural aspects of these rituals.

It is important to make a differentiation in this next section between halachic ritual actions and customs and additions that have cultural and societal rather than halachic underpinnings. The importance of making these distinctions directly affects the decisions that were made in the development of the Last Supper Seder Haggadah. This will be discussed in depth in Chapter 5.

Getting Ready for the Seder

It is traditional to make the Passover table as beautiful as possible. This is in accordance with the rabbinic principle of *hiddur mitzvah*, the beautification of the performance of a commandment.” Attendance at a Seder is a Biblical commandment. Therefore, one should use one’s most beautiful china, glassware, silverware and

⁵⁷ Details of the Temple in Jerusalem. http://www.bible-history.com/court-of-women/circular_steps.html. Accessed Dec.22, 2013.

tablecloths for this event. When guests arrive for the Seder, the table is set for a lavish meal.

Traditional Jews use cooking implements, china, glassware, silver and tablecloths that are set aside for use on Passover only. This is in observance of the Biblical commandment that prior to Passover, Jews must rid themselves of all chametz⁵⁸ – (anything leavened or not kosher for Passover.) Passover dishes and other implements are carefully stored from year to year in a separate storage space and are not used at any other time of the year.

There are certain ritual items that must be on every Seder table. There must be a plate or 3 sectioned box or soft bag for the three ceremonial matzot. A cup for Elijah the Prophet must be on the table. In some homes, a Kos Miriam – a cup for Miriam the Prophet filled with water -is also added to bring attention to the contribution of women to Jewish history. Bowls of salt water must be set so that people can reach them. A Kiddush cup for the leader and wine glasses for each participant must be present. A bowl of parsley (or other vegetable) for dipping, a plate of another bitter herb – maror - (usually white horseradish) and a bowl or plate of charoset (a fruit, nut and wine mixture) must also be available. At some Seders, each participant has a separate plate with a piece of parsley, maror and some charoset. However, the centerpiece of the Seder Table is the Seder Plate.

The use of a beautiful Seder Plate at Passover is a fulfillment of *hiddur mitzvah*. The creation of beautiful Seder Plates has been a focus of Judaic artists for centuries.⁵⁹ It

⁵⁸ The proper pronunciation of this word is cha-MAYTZ where the ch is a guttural sound. The ch is the same sound as in the word challah. However, Eastern European Jews often use the Yiddish-inflected pronunciation – CHA-metz or the more Yiddish– CHUM-itiz or CHOOM-itiz.

⁵⁹ See appendix for some illustrations of Seder Plates.

is not unusual for there to be more than one Seder Plate on a table if there are many people attending. Also, because making a Seder Plate is an almost universal activity in the lower grades of Jewish religious schools, homes with children will often have the child's handmade Seder Plate on the table.

The Seder Plate holds all of the items, except for the matzah, which are necessary for the food-related rituals of the Passover Seder. There are also other traditional elements on the Seder Plate that are not part of the ritual but which have become part of the Seder plate. Today, a "traditional" Seder Plate contains the following elements:

Maror – usually horseradish root or ground white horseradish although in some traditions Romaine lettuce is used. This item is of Biblical origin.⁶⁰

Karpas – a green vegetable, usually parsley. This item came into use in the Tanaaitic Period – pre-Mishnaic – 225 C.E.⁶¹

Chazeret – another type of bitter vegetable/herb sometimes used for the korekh sandwich.⁶² Romaine is often used for the chazeret. This item is also Tanaaitic.

Charoset – a mixture of nuts, fruit and wine. – Tanaaitic Period. Both the Babylonian and the Jerusalem Talmuds are sources for the idea that charoset is a paste that symbolizes the mortar that the Israelites had to make on their own as they labored in slavery.⁶³

⁶⁰ See Numbers 9:11.

⁶¹ Mishna Pesachim 10.3.

⁶² The korekh sandwich is made up of matzah, bitter herb and at some Seders, charoset and is eaten after the ritual blessings and eating of matzah, maror and charoset.

⁶³ B. Pesachim 116a; Y. Pesachim X, 3, 37d as cited in Guggenheimer. *Scholar's Haggadah*, p. 200.

Every culture has its own charoset recipe⁶⁴. Ashkenazi Jews use apples, walnuts and wine. The mixture is like a finely chopped fruit salad. The use of apples in charoset traces back to a statement in the Talmud. In a discussion of whether or not charoset is a religious requirement in the Seder, R. Levi is quoted as saying, “In memory of the apple tree.”⁶⁵ This is a reference to a verse in B. Sota 11b which describes the ways in which the Israelite women thwarted Pharaoh’s machinations to keep the Israelites from procreating. Song of Songs 8:5 is quoted: “Under the apple tree I roused you; It was there your mother conceived you, there she who was in labor gave you birth.”

Sephardic Jews use dried and fresh fruits and create a paste that can be rolled into small balls or manipulated into shapes. Egyptian Jews form charoset into miniature pyramids to commemorate the Exodus from Egypt.⁶⁶

Beitzah –a roasted egg. The egg and the zeroah are in remembrance of the two sacrificial offerings that were eaten on the first night of Passover.⁶⁷ The egg symbolizes fertility, mourning and redemption. This was added in the Amoraic Period – 225 – 650 C.E.

Zeroah – a roasted bone, usually a lamb shank bone. This bone symbolizes the Pesach offering. The Talmud gives vegetarians permission to use a beet instead of a bone.⁶⁸ The bone also seems to have been added in the Amoraic Period.⁶⁹ The word

⁶⁴ *Charoset Recipes from Around the World*.
<http://www.hadassah.org/site/apps/nlnet/content2.aspx?c=9rKQI8MJIdIWE&b=8332583&ct=12171085>.
Accessed December 26, 2013.

⁶⁵ B. Pesachim 116a.

⁶⁶ Miriam Krule, *You’re Doing It Wrong: Charoset*.
http://www.slate.com/blogs/browbeat/2012/04/04/best_charoset_recipe_it_should_look_like_mortar_and_aste_like_dates_walnuts_and_apples.htm. Accessed Dec.26, 2013.

⁶⁷ Guggenheimer. *Scholar’s Haggadah*. p. 202.

⁶⁸ B. Pesachim 114b.

⁶⁹ See Freedman. *Polychrome Haggadah* for the dating of the additions to the Seder plate. p. 9.

zeroah means “arm.” This term for the roasted bone may have been selected because it brings attention to the Biblical verse that indicates that God brought the Israelites out of Egypt “with an outstretched arm.” (Exodus 6:6.)⁷⁰ Some families and communities have the tradition of substituting a chicken neck for a shank bone on the Seder Plate. This substitution makes it clear that it is no longer possible to offer the Paschal sacrifice in the Temple in Jerusalem.⁷¹

There is a wide variety of traditions about the placement of the ritual items on the Seder Plate.⁷² Just as the liturgy of the Haggadah has continued to develop and reflect Jewish history and societal concerns, the items on the Seder Plate have also been expanded. The most notable addition is that of an orange.

The orange is a symbol of inclusion for gays and lesbians into mainstream Jewish life. This thesis is being written in 2013, a time when marriage equality is gaining ground and the inclusion of gays and lesbians is no longer a pressing issue in the Jewish community. However, in the early 1980’s as AIDs was just beginning to come into the public consciousness, the political and social landscape for gays and lesbians, especially with regard to religious institutions, was far from welcoming.

In the early 1980’s, Susannah Heschel, the daughter of Abraham Joshua Heschel and a noted Jewish feminist scholar visited Oberlin College. While there, she was shown an Haggadah written by students to address feminist concerns. One of the new rituals was to add a piece of bread to the Seder Plate.

⁷⁰Mordell Klein, ed. *Passover*, Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America, 1973, p. 57; cited at <http://avirtualpassover.com/shankbone.htm>. Accessed Dec. 26, 2013.

⁷¹ Shankbone. http://www.chabad.org/holidays/passover/pesach_cdo/aid/1999/jewish/The-Shank-Bone.htm. Accessed Dec. 26, 2013.

⁷² Heinrich Guggenheimer. *The Scholars Haggadah: Ashkenazic, Sephardic and Oriental Versions*; Northvale: Jason Aronson, Inc., 1995, pp. 200-204.

This is a clear violation of the laws of Passover. One may not have any type of leavened substance in one's home during the seven day (outside of Israel, eight day) festival.⁷³ The punishment for eating chametz during Passover, and by extension possessing chametz during Passover is excommunication from the Jewish People. This is based on several verses in Exodus.⁷⁴ Putting bread on the Seder Plate is a shocking violation of the laws of Passover. The students' concept was to draw attention to the prevailing attitude that "there's as much room for a lesbian in Judaism as there is for a crust of bread on the Seder plate."⁷⁵

The following year, Heschel put an orange on her family's Seder Plate to symbolize solidarity with gays, lesbians and other people who she felt were marginalized by the Jewish community.⁷⁶ This tradition has grown over the decades and is now relatively standard in feminist Seders as a symbol of inclusion for all outsiders.

Lighting the Festival Candles

Before beginning the Seder, the festival lights are kindled with the appropriate blessing. If Passover falls on a Friday night, the blessing for Shabbat is added to the blessing for lighting the festival candles.⁷⁷ In America, it is traditional to use two white utility candles which are approximately 4 ¼" high. Shabbat candles must burn for a

⁷³ The Shalosh Regalim – the three pilgrimage festivals: Passover, Shavuot and Succot are the most important holy days (after Shabbat) in the Jewish calendar. From ancient times, in order to make it possible for Diaspora communities to properly observe the festivals on the correct days, an extra day of observance was added to make sure that there was enough time for these communities outside the land of Israel to corroborate the date of the New Moon. Both Passover and Sukkot begin in the middle of the month; Shavuot takes place on the 50th day after the beginning of Passover. For a more extensive explanation, see Klein. *Jewish Practice*. pp. 99-102.

⁷⁴ See Exodus 12:19-20; 12:9; 13:7; 23:18.

⁷⁵ Susannah Heschel, *The Origin of the Orange on the Seder Plate*.
http://www.miriamscup.com/Heschel_orange.htm, 2001. Accessed Dec.26, 2013.

⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁷ All Haggadot contain these prayers.

minimum of two hours.⁷⁸ Olive oil or any oil that produces a clear flame may be used instead of a candle.⁷⁹ Votive candles may not be used. Although candle lighting is not officially part of the Seder, some families incorporate the candle lighting into the Seder by delaying the candle lighting until everyone is seated at the table. In some homes multiple sets of candles may be made available so that anyone who would like to light the candles and say the blessing may do so.

There is no mention of the candle lighting in the traditional order of the Seder because the kindling of the festival lights is performed as part of every Jewish festival and is therefore not strictly part of the Passover Seder.

Another issue has to do with the timing of candle lighting and the beginning of the Seder. Candle lighting is always no later 18 minutes before sunset.⁸⁰ However, the tradition is for the Seder to begin approximately 40 minutes after sunset. There is even a leniency that one can begin 35 minutes after sunset so that it doesn't become too late for the children.⁸¹ In liberal and secular households, it is not unusual for the Seder to begin before sundown and for the candle lighting to be incorporated into the beginning of the Seder. However, the Seder "officially" begins with the festival Kiddush, the festival blessing over wine. In some families, the order of the Seder is chanted before Kadesh.

The chanting of the order of the Seder dates back to a time when written or printed Haggadot were not easily available. The words rhyme so that the order is easy to

⁷⁸ Burning of Shabbat candles. <http://www.aish.com/sh/ht/fn/48965051.html>. Accessed Dec.27, 2013.

⁷⁹ Alternatives to Shabbat Candles <http://www.aish.com/sh/ht/fn/48965051.html>. Accessed Dec. 27, 2013.

⁸⁰ Candle lighting. http://www.chabad.org/calendar/candlelighting_cdo/aid/6226/jewish/Candle-Lighting-Times.htm. Accessed Dec.28, 2013.

⁸¹ Beginning the Seder. <http://www.dailyhalacha.com/Display.asp?ClipDate=4/4/2004>. Accessed Dec. 27, 2013.

remember. The formula that appears in most Haggadot today is attributed to Rashi, the great 11th century French scholar whose commentaries on the Tanach and the Talmud are considered to be essential to a basic understanding of these texts.^{82 83} The following is the chanted order of the Seder ritual. This has been adapted to a number of different musical settings. The words are linked to help the leader remember them. The list below shows the standard pairing.

Kadesh Urchatz

Karpas Yachatz

Maggid Rachtzah

Motzi Matzah

Marror Korech

Shulchan Oruch (This is one step – the eating of the festival meal)

Tzafun Bahrech

Hallel Nirtzah

Today, Haggadot are easily available and free or very inexpensive (although elaborate and expensive Haggadot are printed every year.) In 1932, the Maxwell House Coffee Company began to issue traditional Haggadot that were available free in supermarkets. A new gender neutral edition was issued in 2011.⁸⁴ A wide range of Haggadot are also available for free on the internet. Some Seder leaders create their own Haggadot to meet specific needs of their family and friends.

⁸² <http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/biography/rashi.html>. Accessed Dec. 16, 2013.

⁸³ *Haggadah Shelemah*. Menachem Mendel Kasher. Jerusalem; Machon Torah Shelemah, 1967, p. 77.

⁸⁴ Maxwell House Haggadah http://www.thejewishweek.com/news/new_york/good_last_dayenu. Accessed Dec. 16, 2013.

At most Seders, everyone will have a copy of the Haggadah that the leader is using. For this reason, at some Seders, the chanting of the order of the Seder is omitted. Also, since a Seder can last for many hours, a leader may cut certain sections of text to shorten the ceremony. Since the chanting of the order of the service is a tradition and is not halachic, there is not a problem in deleting this liturgy.

We will now examine the individual steps of the Seder.

The Order of the Seder - 14 (or 15) Steps to Freedom

Kaddesh – (First Cup of Wine)

The Kaddesh is the first of the four cups of wine that will be drunk during the Seder. The most popular explanation for why there are four cups of wine is that there are four promises that God makes to the Israelites with respect to their being brought out of Egypt: (Exodus 6:6-7).

1. “I will **free** you from the labors of the Egyptians
2. and **deliver** you from their bondage.
3. I will **redeem** you with an outstretched arm and through extraordinary acts of judgment.
4. I will **take** you to be My people and I will be your God.”

The rabbis focus on the four verbs “free,” “deliver,” “redeem” and “take” and ascribed a midrashic (homiletic) label to each of the four cups: The Cup of Sanctification (Kadesh – cup 1), The Cup of Deliverance (cup 2) The cup of Redemption (cup 3) and the Cup of (Messianic) Hope.⁸⁵ Some Haggadot feature a reflection to read or to meditate

⁸⁵ The Four Cups. <http://www.torahresource.com/EnglishArticles/Four%20Cups.pdf>. Accessed January 15, 2014.

on before each cup of wine that incorporates the Biblical text for that particular cup. The text for the first cup is “I will free you from the burden of the Egyptians.” (Exodus 6:6)

The first cup is the only one of the four cups that has its own official step in the outline of the Seder. The term for this first step is Kadesh. The Hebrew root for this word- *koof daled resh* – suggests the concept “set aside for God.” In this step, the long festival blessing (Kiddush) over the fruit of the vine (grape wine or grape juice) is sung or recited.⁸⁶ As with the candle blessing, every festival meal begins with the blessing over wine or grape juice. However, because of the law that mandates that the festival Kiddush⁸⁷ be said *b'makom se'uda* – in the place where one will take part in the meal⁸⁸– the Kiddush is part of the order of the Seder.

⁸⁶ There are a number of different types of blessings in Judaism. Each type has its own particular ritual formula and specific actions attached to them. The simplest blessing is the Birkat Hanehenin – the blessing of appreciation. In this blessing, a six word formula begins every blessing: “Baruch atah Adonai elohaynu melech haolam” – “Praised are you, Lord our God, King of the Universe.” The second part of the blessing names the specific object or experience for which we are grateful. Probably the best known blessing of this type is the blessing over wine: “Baruch ata Adonai eloheinu melech haolam borai p’ri hagafen” – Praised are You, Lord our God who creates the fruit of the vine. For festivals, including Shabbat, additional liturgy is added to this blessing to create a link to the particular festival. The proper ritual action for this type of blessing is to recite or sing the blessing and then “appreciate” (eat, sip, smell) the object of the blessing, in this case the wine or grape juice. Only grape wine or grape juice may receive this blessing. Wines made of tree fruits require a blessing for fruits of the tree. Such wines may not be used for traditional ritual purposes.

The second most common category of blessings is the birkot Hamitzvot. These blessings are tied to the performance of mitzvot – prescribed ritual actions. These would include the lighting of Sabbath and Festival candles, ritual hand washing and the eating of matzah. These blessings begin with the same six ritual words as the birkot hanehenin but go on to comment that God made the Jewish people holy through the mitzvot (the 613 commandments and the rabbinic extensions of these mitzvot) and concludes with the statement “and commanded us to...” The specific ritual action is then specified. For Shabbat candle lighting the blessing concludes, “who has commanded us to light the Sabbath light.” Candle lighting for Shabbat is a ritual extension of the Torah’s commandments for the Sabbath. There is no commandment in the Torah regarding the lighting of Shabbat candles.

The third type of blessing are blessings of praise. These are usually found in liturgical settings and rarely have ritual actions attached to them.

⁸⁷ The term “kiddush” is a general way of referring to any blessing said over wine or grape juice. The actual liturgy of the kiddush depends on the ritual situation – i.e., wedding ceremony, evening festival, Shabbat morning.

⁸⁸ Shulchan Aruch, Orach Hayyim 273:1.

Grape wine and the Kiddush are part of every joyous Jewish occasion because of the idea that wine lifts one's spirits and adds to the joy of the occasion. The laws about the saying of Kiddush are very clear. Only grape juice or fermented grape juice may be used for this blessing. This proscription is based on a number of different sources. Psalm 104:15 refers to "wine that gladdens the heart of man." In the Talmud, a discussion of the commandment "remember the Sabbath" is understood to mean that it should be "remembered" with wine.⁸⁹

How much wine should be drunk when one is saying Kiddush? And why should how much make a difference? (Please note that I am using the term "wine" here to refer to any fruit of the vine, fermented or unfermented. Either is permitted.)

In fulfilling commandments, it is extremely important to fulfill them "correctly" because one is performing an action dictated by the Holy One. The concept of scrupulousness in the performance of ritual actions is common to many religions. In the case of drinking wine during the Seder, the commandment to say the blessing over wine on Shabbat is, as we saw, a *mitzvah d'oreita* – from the Torah. However, the Torah does not say how much wine should be drunk. (Also, it should be noted that the *d'oreita* mitzvah with respect to the drinking of wine on Shabbat is inferred by the rabbis rather than explicitly stated in the Torah. Understanding which commandments are *d'oreita* and which are *d'rabbanan* is often a difficult process.)

The question of how much wine to drink is left to the rabbis to decide. The rabbinic decree is that approximately 4.4 ounces should be drunk in conjunction with the Shabbat Kiddush. However, there is some disagreement about this.⁹⁰ The drinking of

⁸⁹ B. Pesachim 106a.

⁹⁰ Kiddush. <http://www.halachipedia.com/index.php?title=Kiddush>. Accessed Dec. 17, 2013.

wine for the festival Kiddush is approximately 4.42 ounces according to Rabbi Dovid Feinstein's *Haggadah Kol Dodi*.⁹¹

The text of the festival kiddush is made up of three separate blessings. **The first blessing** is the traditional blessing of appreciation over the “fruit of the vine.” **The second blessing** is based on the text of the Sabbath kiddush with appropriate festival insertions. The Festival kiddush for Passover includes the following points:

1. Acknowledgement of the covenant between YHVH⁹² and the Jewish People. This covenantal relationship is sometimes referred to as the “choseness” of the Jewish People by God.
2. Appreciation for times of joy and celebration.
3. Appreciation for the festival of Passover which commemorates *yitzeit Mitzrayim* – literally “the going out” of the Israelites from Egypt.

The third blessing is the Shehecheyanu.⁹³ The Shehecheyanu is a prayer that gives thanks to God for making it possible for one to have experienced a special event. This prayer is not normally part of the Kiddush but is inserted on certain festivals. The text dates to the Tannaitic period (pre-Mishnaic – 225 C.E.)⁹⁴

⁹¹ Ibid. f. 6.

⁹² YHVH refers to the most sacred name of God for Jews. This is the name that is never pronounced and which is translated in English as the word Lord. YHVH is the name of the god who made a covenant with Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and later with the Israelites at Mount Sinai. When coming across the word YHVH in a ritual setting, Jews substitute the word “Adonai” – My Lord. Other words are used in non-ritual settings to prevent a Jew from any possibility of violating the third of the Ten Commandments which cautions against using God’s name in an inappropriate way. The most common substitution is the word “HaShem” – The Name. Christians have no prohibition about pronouncing YHVH and often use the words Jehovah or Yahweh when this name is indicated in a Biblical text.

⁹³ Shulchan Aruch 673.1.

⁹⁴ Jacob Freedman, D.D., *Polychrome Historical Haggadah for Passover*, Springfield, MA. Jacob Freedman Liturgy Research Foundation, 1974, p. 12.

The bulk of the text for the Kiddush was inserted during the Geonic Period.⁹⁵ With respect to the chanting of Kadesh, there are varying traditions. Some people stand; some sit. In some situations only the leader stands.⁹⁶

After the blessing is recited, everyone sits and leans to the left while drinking the wine. Again, the custom varies from one household to another. In some families, the tradition is that only the leader of the Seder “reclines” by leaning to the left against a pillow that has been placed on the chair for that particular purpose.⁹⁷

While the reclining does not have its own “step” of the Seder and is understood to be part of Kadesh, this is an extremely important part of the Seder and is connected to one of the core concepts of the Seder – that of freedom.

In ancient times, poor people, working people and slaves ate quickly, sitting or squatting on the ground. Wealthy people ate slowly and reclined on banquettes – long cushioned couches. The term “banquette” is related to the word “banquet” – meaning a feast. At a feast, one reclined on a banquette.⁹⁸ When one reclines during the Seder, we take part in a behavior that was traditionally only possible for free people. Reclining is a symbol of freedom for the participants in a Seder.⁹⁹

Urchatz (Hand Washing)

This is the first of 2 hand washing rituals. Hand washing prior to eating is a well-entrenched ritual in the Jewish community that has its source in the Torah. In Exodus, Moses is commanded to make a copper laver and to place it between the Tent of Meeting

⁹⁵ Ibid.

⁹⁶ Kiddush rituals. <http://www.halachipedia.com/index.php?title=Kaddesh> f. 4; <http://www.halachipedia.com/index.php?title=Kiddush> f. 55,58, 59. Accessed Jan. 16, 2013.

⁹⁷ Orach Hayyim, 472:2-3.

⁹⁸ <http://www.thefreedictionary.com/banquet> Accessed Dec. 15, 2013.

⁹⁹ Isaac Klein. *A Guide to Jewish Religious Practice*. New York; Jewish Theological Seminary of America, p. 123.

and the Altar so that Aaron and the other *Kohanim*¹⁰⁰ can wash their hands and feet before approaching the Altar to serve the Holy One.

“Then the Lord said to Moses, “Make a copper basin, with its copper stand, for washing. Place it between the tent of meeting and the altar, and put water in it. Aaron and his sons are to wash their hands and feet with water from it. Whenever they enter the Tent of Meeting, they shall wash with water so that they will not die. Also, when they approach the altar to serve to turn into smoke an offering buy fire to the Lord, they shall wash their hands and feet so that they will not die. It shall be a law for all time for them – for him and his offspring – throughout the ages.” (Exodus 30:17-20).

Through the washing ritual, Aaron and the other priest became both physically and ritually purified. When the Temple was in operation, hand and foot washing rituals were performed by all the officials in the Temple prior to officiating at a sacrifice. When the Temple was destroyed by the Romans in 70 C.E.,¹⁰¹ the rabbis ruled that the table in the home was to be understood as a substitute for the Temple altar and that prayer would substitute for Temple sacrifices.

In an effort to retain the ritual of cleanliness associated with offering sacrifices, the rabbis created a variety of laws around hand washing and the eating of food. Today, many Jews still observe these laws. The hand washing rituals in the Seder are included in every Haggadah though the actual performance of the ritual may vary from one home to another.

¹⁰⁰ The term Kohen or Kohain refers to all male members of the tribe of Levi who are part of Aaron’s family. The Kohen Gadol – the High Priest – could only be someone directly related to Aaron – son, grandson. The Kohanim (pl) were responsible to the most ritually important duties in the temple. They offered sacrifices and led worship. Because they served God most directly, they were required to maintain a level of ritual purity much higher than other Levites. For a general overview of Kohanim, see <http://judaism.about.com/od/worshiprituals/f/kohen.htm>. Accessed Jan. 6, 2014.

¹⁰¹ Qorbanot (Temple sacrifices) and the switch to prayer. <http://www.jewfaq.org/qorbanot.htm>. Accessed March 13, 2014.

The hand washing in this part of the Seder is specifically related to eating a food that is dipped in liquid. In Leviticus 11:34 it says, “Any food that may be eaten shall become impure if it came in contact with water...” The practice of the first Passover ritual of hand washing before dipping the green vegetable in salt water is based on this Biblical passage and on discussions in the Talmud and the Tur.¹⁰²

The normal Jewish pattern of saying a blessing prior to eating requires an appropriate blessing. Generally, at a main meal or a shared meal where bread made with water would be served, one would say the *birkat hamazon* – the blessing over bread. This blessing covers all types of food that might be eaten during the meal¹⁰³ but does not cover wine. Drinking wine, as we have seen, requires its own blessing. The chanting of the *birkat hamazon* requires that a ritual hand washing with its own blessing be performed before saying the *birkat hamazon*.¹⁰⁴

There is a particular order of blessings when Jews eat a normal meal. The ritual is to say the blessing over the wine, wash hands, and then say the blessing over bread. In the Passover Seder, the order is changed. A blessing over a vegetable is said instead of the blessing over bread.

A vegetable is dipped in salt water, which is not forbidden, but it's not a traditional practice at any time other than Pesach. Then the blessing for vegetables is

¹⁰² B. Pesachim.115a; Tur, O.H. 473. The Tur, also referred to as the “Arba‘ah Turim” is a 14th century Code of Jewish Law that is the basis of the Shulchan Aruch, the authoritative foundation for all modern Jewish law. The term “Arba‘ah Turim” means “four rows” and is an allusion to the four rows of jewels on the breastplate of the High Priest. There were 12 jewels in all, standing for the 12 tribes of Israel. There are four sections of the Tur. A citation from the Tur, as above – Tur, O.H. 473 means “to be found in the Tur, in section Orach Hayyim, chapter 473.” See the following for more details: http://www.myjewishlearning.com/texts/Rabbinics/Halakhah/Medieval/Shulhan_Arukh/Arbaah_Turim.shtm. Accessed Jan. 6, 2014.

¹⁰³ Tur O.H. 177:1; 174:1

¹⁰⁴ Klein, *A Guide*, p. 49.

recited (the same blessing that would be recited any time vegetables are eaten without bread), and the vegetable is eaten. This change in the “natural order of things” is something that would catch the attention of a child who lives in a ritually observant household. Vegetables would not normally be eaten before bread and bread would usually be eaten very soon after the blessing over the wine.

Karpas, which immediately follows Urchatz, is a ritual during which a green vegetable, usually parsley, is dipped in salt water and then eaten. Prior to eating the green vegetable, the prayer giving thanks for food that grows in the ground is said.¹⁰⁵ Eating this type of food requires hand washing but does not require the blessing for hand washing.¹⁰⁶

There is disagreement among rabbis and scholars as to whether all people at the Seder should wash the first time or if only the leader should wash. At many Seders, in order to save time, the leader washes his/her hands, often at the table, to fulfill the obligation for all of the participants.¹⁰⁷ However, the second hand washing, which precedes the eating of Matzah, is performed by all the guests. The hand washing for Urchatz takes place right after the drinking of the first cup of wine - the step called “Kadesh” – holiness.

Karpas.¹⁰⁸ (Dipping the Green Vegetable)

Each person takes a piece of the vegetable provided – in America, usually

¹⁰⁵ Tur O.H. 203:1.

¹⁰⁶ Klein, *A Guide*, p. 124.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid.

¹⁰⁸ The derivation of this word is unclear. It is NOT Hebrew. The word in the Seder refers to the green vegetable that is dipped in salted water at this point in the ritual.
ritual.<http://www.balashon.com/2006/04/karpas.html>. Accessed Jan. 6, 2014.

parsley, although some families use celery or a piece of potato. Amram Gaon, the head of the Jewish Talmud Academy in Sura in the 9th Century C.E. lists a number of different vegetables that can be used for Karpas in his prayer book. These include radishes, lettuce, arugula, cilantro and parsley.¹⁰⁹ All of the vegetables are those that are grown in the earth. This is because the blessing of appreciation that is to be said is the prayer that thanks God for the fruit of the earth. After the blessing, the vegetable is dipped in salt water and then the vegetable is eaten.¹¹⁰

How much of the vegetable should be eaten? Most people eat the piece of the vegetable that is supplied to them – usually a small piece. This custom is based on the idea that the eating of the Karpas is merely a vehicle to keep the children interested in the Seder¹¹¹ and is not intended to have enough volume to require the blessing after eating a vegetable (*Bracha Achrona* – Blessing Afterwards.)¹¹²

There is a disagreement among the rabbis about what actually constitutes the amount of food that must be consumed to fulfill the ritual of Karpas properly. The halachah is that if one eats less than a *kezait* (an olive) of the vegetable, no blessing after eating the vegetable is required. However, there is also disagreement about the size of a *kezait*. Some authorities rule that it is approximately the size of half an egg – approximately 1.3 ounces. Others rule that it is smaller – closer to just under an ounce.¹¹³

¹⁰⁹ Rabbi Dr. Lawrence Hoffman and Dr. David Arnow, eds., *My People's Passover Haggadah*. Woodstock, VT: Jewish Lights Publishing, vol. 1, p. 119.

¹¹⁰ Tur O.H. 473:17.

¹¹¹ Tur. O.H. 473.

¹¹² “*Bracha Achrona*” is an umbrella term for all blessings that must be said after eating. The text is determined by the food that was eaten, the amount eaten, the time taken to eat the food and the combination of foods that made up the snack or meal; snacks and meals require different blessings. For more information see: http://www.berachot.org/halacha/15_brachaachrona.html. Accessed Jan. 6, 2014.

¹¹³ Measurement of “*kezayit*” – olive.
<http://www.halachipedia.com/index.php?title=Kazayit#Kazayit>. Accessed 12/15/13.

Why is a vegetable dipped in salt water? This simple ritual has a number of different explanations. One explanation is that the parsley is a reminder of spring and the salt water is a reminder of the tears that the Israelites shed when they were slaves in Egypt.¹¹⁴ The midrashic explanation of combining the hope of spring with a remembrance of bitterness is to emphasize the Seder's redemptive message: that even when there is pain and suffering, God will be faithful and restore our fortunes.

The Tur says that dipping the parsley in salt water is intended to make children curious.¹¹⁵ An historical aspect of this ritual goes back to Roman times when all banquets began with appetizers, typically raw vegetables dipped in salt water or vinegar.¹¹⁶ Eating this "appetizer" is another reminder that we are free people who have the privilege of feasting in comfort and safety. Cecil Roth, in his Haggadah, suggests that there is a parallel between dipping the parsley in water and the hyssop that was dipped in blood to mark the doorways of the Israelites on the night of the first Passover sacrifice.¹¹⁷

At my family Seder, we embrace the Roman Banquet concept of Karpas as appetizers. After the ritual of dipping the parsley in salt water, participants are invited to help themselves to platters of cut fresh vegetables and vegetarian and vegetable dips as we go through the rituals that lead up to the formal dinner. This has the advantage of taking the edge off one's hunger and making it possible to focus on the Seder itself. The period of time between Karpas and the serving of dinner in a somewhat traditional Seder can be an hour or more.

¹¹⁴ Salt water in the Seder. http://www.holidays.net/passover/Seder_plate.htm. Accessed 12/16/13.

¹¹⁵ Tur. O.H. 473.

¹¹⁶ Klein. *Guide*. P. 124

¹¹⁷ Cecil Roth, *The Haggadah: A New Edition*. London: Soncino Press, 1934, p. 8.

Yachatz (Dividing the Matzah)

On the table are three ceremonial matzot. These may be stacked one on top of another and covered by a cloth. However, special holders for these matzot – either cloth bags with three pockets or boxes with three shelves or sections may also be used. For Yachatz, the leader takes the middle Matzah and breaks it in half. The larger half is wrapped in a cloth and is set aside to serve as the *Afikomen*. (See Tzafun – Step 12 in this chapter.) The *Afikomen* gets hidden during the meal and the Seder cannot be completed until it is found. The broken Matzah represents the *lechem oni*– bread of affliction.

On Shabbat and Festivals it is traditional to have two loaves of challah on the table in remembrance of the double portion of manna that the Holy One gave to Israelites on the Sabbath when they were traveling through the wilderness.¹¹⁸ Because one of the matzot must be broken in half to signify the “bread of affliction,” it is necessary to have two whole matzot to fulfill the commandment of remembering the manna.¹¹⁹

The text that follows the ritual of Yachatz begins the next section –Maggid (Telling) with the words, “This is the bread of affliction which our ancestors ate in the land of Mitzrayim.”¹²⁰ This is the “bread of affliction” because the broken pieces are a reminder that the poor eat crumbs rather than unbroken bread.¹²¹

The three rituals just described: Urchatz, Karpas and Yachatz, are performed one after another with only direction from the leader about what to do and without any liturgy other than the blessing over the vegetable. If there are children at the table, in order to

¹¹⁸ See Exodus 16:22; B. Shabbat 117b.

¹¹⁹ *Seder Rav 'Amram*, ed. Goldschmidt, p. 113.

¹²⁰ *The Feat of Freedom*, p. 31.

¹²¹ B. Pesachim 115b-0116a.

keep their interest, the leader may ask them what they know about the dipping of the parsley in the salt water. The Seder then transitions to “Maggid,” a segment that contains some of the best known liturgy in the Jewish world.

Maggid (Story Telling)

The story of the Exodus from Egypt – *Yitzitat Mitzrayim* – is detailed in this segment of the Seder. Telling the story of the Exodus from Egypt is one of the commandments related to the observance of Passover.¹²² In this section of the Seder, the story is told in a variety of ways.

Introduction to Maggid

Maggid begins when the leader uncovers the 3 ceremonial matzot and lifts them up so that everyone can see them. Then the leader or a participant reads, sings or chants the introductory liturgy, which is written in Aramaic:

Ha lachma anya di achalu avhatana b'ara d'mitzrayim. Kol dicfin yeitei v'yeichol, kol ditzrich yeitei v'yifsach. Hashata haca l'shana haba-ah di'yisrael. Hashata avde l'shanah haba-ah b'nei chotin.

This is the bread of affliction which our ancestors ate in the land of Mitzrayim. All who are hungry, let them enter and eat. All who are in need, let them come celebrate Pesach. Now we are here. Next year in the land of Israel. Now we are enslaved. Next year we will be free.¹²³

The text of *Ha lachma anya* has a structure that underscores the inherent participatory nature of the Seder and clearly states the Seder's Messianic message.

“This is the bread of affliction which our ancestors ate in the land of Mitzrayim.”

The opening sentence establishes the generational link between the participants of the Seder, their ancestors and, by implication, the God of the Israelites. The chain of Jewish

¹²² See Exodus 13:18.

¹²³ *The Feat of Freedom*, pp. 30-31.

tradition reaching back generation by generation to the Patriarchal Period is an important and repetitive theme in Jewish prayer liturgy. The generational connection with God and with the ancestors is a central theme in the Amida and the Kedusha, prayers that are part of the thrice-daily liturgy. ”¹²⁴

“All who are hungry, let them enter and eat. All who are in need, let them come celebrate Pesach.” This statement is an invitation to all people, not only Jews, to share the festive meal. It also has a resonance of the Biblical commandment, “You must befriend the stranger because you were strangers in the Land of Egypt” (Deuteronomy 10:19). It is considered meritorious to invite people to share your Seder, especially those who are unable to make their own Seder.¹²⁵

“Now we are here. Next year in the land of Israel.” Prior to 1948 (the founding of the modern State of Israel) this statement might be understood as a wish for the creation of a Jewish homeland. There are overtones of Jewish nationalism, Zionism and Messianism. (Some Jewish groups believed, and still believe, that the Jewish state cannot be actualized until the Messiah comes.) However, there is also the echo of a statement

¹²⁴ *Siddur Sim Shalom*, ed. Rabbi Jules Harlow, New York: The Rabbinical Assembly, 1985, pp. 106-108.

¹²⁵ There is an interesting linguistic issue here. One “makes” a Seder, but one does not “have” a Seder, although this phrase is not unknown. “Making” a Seder is definitely an “activity” and it requires an enormous effort on the part of the person who will lead the ritual (and needs to prepare to do so) and for the person or persons responsible for hosting the festival experience and providing the food. It can take weeks of effort. After cleaning the house for Passover and making sure there is no chametz in the house, all the Passover equipment must be brought out and prepared. Because inviting guests is so important for this festival, it is not unusual for families to host twenty or more people for the event. The preparation of the meal is an undertaking of gargantuan proportions. While the Seder ritual itself can be very fluid, the Passover dinner is highly ritualized in many families and cannot change from one year to the next. Everyone’s “traditional” Passover dishes must be served. A typical Ashkenazic Passover meal will begin with gefilte fish, chopped liver or both followed by chicken soup with matzah balls. The entrée is often braised brisket, although chicken or turkey may be served either instead of or in addition to the brisket. There is usually some type of potato dish and several vegetable side dishes. Matzah is eaten with the meal, although this is not a requirement. Wine may be consumed as long as it is kosher for Passover. There are usually several different desserts that are special for Passover, candy, especially chocolate and tea and coffee.

¹²⁵ *The Feat of Freedom*, pp. 66-67.

that appears later in the Maggid. “In each generation, each individual should feel as though he or she had actually been redeemed from Mitzrayim.”¹²⁶ It should be noted that the Hebrew text for the word translated here as “individual” is the Hebrew word *'adam*—a gender neutral person, not someone specifically Jewish. This gives rise to an interpretation that while these two phrases can be understood as Zionist, there is also the implication that the Jewish struggle for survival is a universal struggle and that the Jewish people are responsible for being *l'or goyim* – a light to the nations¹²⁷ while working with non-Jews to bring healing to our broken world.

“Now we are enslaved. Next year we will be free.” What is the nature of our slavery? What is the nature of our freedom? Can one be free if others are enslaved? What is our responsibility with respect to freeing ourselves and freeing others? Is this a Messianic wish, or a call to action?

Maggid begins with these four statements; statements which raise many of the issues that will be discussed during the Seder. The allusion to a Messianic time or event will be recapitulated at the very end of the Seder when *Next Year in Jerusalem* is sung.

A midrashic teaching from the Mishna teaches that a father should teach his son about the Exodus from Egypt, beginning with “disgrace” (meaning the subjugation of the Israelites) and ending with “praise.”¹²⁸ While “praise” is the traditional translation of the Hebrew word *shevach*, the root *shin, vet, chet* also has an association with the words “return,” repatriation,” and “glorify,” words that have more redemptive and Messianic overtones.

¹²⁶ Ibid.

¹²⁷ See Isaiah 49:6.

¹²⁸ Mishna Pesachim 10:4.

The word *shevach* has interesting mystical overtones embedded in its gematria. *Shin* = 300, *Vet*=2, *Chet*= 8 yields the sum 310. When this number is deconstructed one is left with 3 and 10. Both these numbers allude to the Holy One. The number 3 alludes to the basic unit of continuity – father, mother, child. It is understood that the Holy One is responsible for the fulfillment of the wish of parents for offspring. Therefore, the number 3 is a reminder of God’s power in continuing human life.¹²⁹

The number ten is related to the Hebrew letter Yud. Yud has the shape of a downward pointing finger (“yad”). The “finger” is understood to be the “finger” of the One who points down at us. Michelangelo depicted this beautifully in the Sistine Chapel painting of the Creation of Adam in which God and Adam touch fingers.¹³⁰

Looking at the word *shevach* through the lens of Jewish mysticism, we can intuit that at the conclusion of the Seder we will encounter the Holy One who redeemed us from our degradation and who will one day grant us eternal salvation.

The Four Questions

The Maggid formally begins with the chanting of the Four Questions. This section of the Maggid has developed into a ritual designed to involve children in the performance of the Seder although that was not the original intention.¹³¹ Today it is an almost universal custom that the youngest child reads or chants these questions.¹³² It is a source of great pride for both parents and children when a young person performs this ritual for the first time. Although some families insist that the child must chant the Four Questions

¹²⁹ This is a teaching I learned from my husband, Sofer Neil Yerman, a gifted scribe and a teacher of gematria and Jewish Mysticism.

¹³⁰ Sistine Chapel – God and Adam. <http://www.flickr.com/photos/billyandlynn/5896595668/> Accessed Dec. 18, 2013.

¹³¹ Guggenheimer, *The Scholar’s Haggadah*. pp. 245-246.

¹³² Ibid., p. 246.

from a written text, it is not unknown for children who cannot yet read to commit the text to memory in order to be able to chant the Four Questions at the Seder. The participants at the Seder may join the child or just join in or the chorus.

For Ashkenazic Jews, the term *Fier (fear) Kashas* (Four Questions – in Yiddish) has a cultural resonance that goes beyond the Seder itself. When a grandparent asks the parent of a young child if that child is going to say the *Fier Kashas* at this year's Seder, the question is not so much about the recitation of the text as it is about the preservation and continuity of Jewish heritage and tradition. This is a subtle cultural semantic difference that is not reflected by the question, "Will Joseph be chanting the Four Questions this year?" Although the chanting of the Four Questions was traditionally the domain of the youngest male child, today young girls also chant the Four Questions at many family Seders.

The questions that are asked today are different from those of the Mishnaic and pre-Mishnaic period, especially when the Temple in Jerusalem was still in operation and it was possible to eat the Pascal offering. The Mishna instructs the father to instruct his sons about the ritual and the questions to be asked:

They then mix him the second cup [of wine]. And here the son asks his father (and if the son has not enough understanding his father instructs him), 'Why is this night different from other nights? For on other nights we eat seasoned food (i.e. – dipped vegetables) once, but this night twice; on other nights we eat leavened or unleavened bread, but this night all is unleavened; on other nights we eat flesh roast, stewed, or cooked, but this night all is roast (Mishna Pesachim 10:4).

This order of questions makes the first question "Why is this night different from other nights?" Over time, the order of the questions and the content of the questions

evolved.¹³³ The question that is included today which replaces the question about roast meat is “On all other nights, we dine either sitting upright or reclining, but on this night, we recline.” The earliest source for this question is the siddur of R. Saadia Gaon in the late 9th – early 10th century.¹³⁴ By the time of Rashi (11th century) the question of the roasted meat was eliminated and the question about reclining was added. However, the order of the questions differed between Ashkenazic Jews, who followed the order of the questions presented by Rashi, and Sephardic and Oriental Jews who followed the order presented by Maimonides in the 12th century.¹³⁵

The order of questions presented by Rashi was: matzah, bitter herbs, dipping, reclining. The order presented by Maimonides was: dipping, matzah, bitter herbs, reclining.¹³⁶ Today, Ashkenazic and Sephardic/Oriental Haggadot still follow the order of these questions.¹³⁷

Today, the order of questions in an Ashkenazic Haggadah is:

“Why is this night different from other nights?” (This has become an introductory statement rather than a question.)

“On all other nights we eat either leavened bread or matzah; on this night, only matzah.

On all other nights we eat all types of vegetables; on this night, bitter herbs.

On all other nights, we do not dip vegetables even once; on this night, we dip twice.

¹³³ Ibid. 246-252.

¹³⁴ Ibid. 247.

¹³⁵ Ibid., 247-249.

¹³⁶ Ibid., 248.

¹³⁷ *The Feat of Freedom*, pp. 32-33 (Ashkenazic). *A Sephardic Haggadah*. Rabbi Marc D. Angel, Hoboken; KTAV Publishing House, Inc., 1988, pp. 22-23.

On all other nights, we eat either sitting or reclining; on this night we recline.”¹³⁸

After the chanting¹³⁹ of the Four Questions, the telling of the Exodus from Egypt continues. The matzah is uncovered and the text “Avadim Chayinu”¹⁴⁰ is sung or read. The text continues with liturgy from the Talmudic period leading up to the Four Sons.

The Four Sons

The text for this section is derived from four Biblical verses and from a Midrash in the Mekhilta.¹⁴¹

“In the future, when your son asks you, ‘What is the meaning of the stipulations, decrees and laws the LORD our God has commanded you?’ tell him: ‘We were slaves of Pharaoh in Egypt, but the LORD brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand’ (Deut. 6:20-2).

“And when your children ask you, ‘What does this ceremony mean to you?’ then tell them, ‘It is the Passover sacrifice to the LORD, who passed over the houses of the Israelites in Egypt and spared our homes when he struck down the Egyptians’” (Exodus 12:26).

“In days to come, when your son asks you, ‘What does this mean?’ say to him, ‘With a mighty hand the LORD brought us out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery’” (Exodus 13:14).

“On that day tell your son, ‘I do this because of what the LORD did for me when I came out of Egypt’” (Exodus 13:8).

During the Seder, after reading the story of the Four Sons, it is common to discuss the issues related to the four sons and perhaps to discuss which son each person feels closest to. In feminist or women’s Seders, this liturgy is transformed into the issues of the Four Daughters. Modern liberal Haggadot often present this section as *The Four Children*.

¹³⁸ Translation the author’s.

¹³⁹ The most common musical setting can be found in the appendix.

¹⁴⁰ See Deuteronomy 6:21.

¹⁴¹ *Mekhilta de-Rabbi Ishmael*, pisha 18, ed. Jacob Z. Lauterbach, pp. 166-167; cited in *JPS Haggadah Commentary*. ed. Joseph Tabory. p. 43.

The Four Sons each ask, or attempt to ask a question. The text of the Four Sons and their questions follows:

What does the wise one say? "What are the testimonies, statutes, and laws that God, our Lord, has commanded us? (Deut. 6:20). You should tell this child all the laws of Pesach including the ruling that one may not eat after the Afikomen is consumed.

The wicked son, what does he ask? "What does this ritual mean to *you*?" (Exodus 12:26). By saying, "to you," he implies "but not to himself." Since he has excluded himself from the community, get his attention by saying, "It is because of what God did for me when I went out of Egypt." By saying "for me," you imply "but not for him." Had he been there, he would not have been redeemed.

The simple son, what does he ask? "What is this all about?" You should tell him: "With a strong hand, God brought us out from Egypt, from the house of bondage" (Exodus 13:14).

As for the son who does not know how to ask, you must open the discussion for him, as it is written, "You shall tell your son on that day: 'It is because of this, what God did for me when I went out of Egypt'"¹⁴²(Exodus 13:8).

In the Beginning . . .

This section is a brief chronicle of how the Israelites came to settle in Egypt. At the end of this short section, the second cup of wine is raised and a short statement about God's saving power is recited. The cup is put down after the liturgy without being tasted.

Torah and Midrash

This section is built around four verses in Deuteronomy and is a reflection on these verses. All four verses are read as a complete section and then are separated into phrases which are parsed with Midrashic¹⁴³ explanations many of which employ verses

¹⁴² This is a pastiche of several different versions of this section of the Haggadah. Each Haggadah has its own "take" on how the questions and answers should be presented. This version was developed to present a clear understanding of this text for an audience that might be unfamiliar with it. JD

¹⁴³ Midrash is a technique of explicating Biblical verses. There are a variety of tools that can be employed. The most common are the use of other Biblical verses, stories – usually with a moral lesson, and gematria.

from the Torah to make a specific point. This section is a primer on how to create Midrash on Biblical verses.

Arami ovaïd avi... My father was a wandering Aramean, and he went down into Egypt with a few people and lived there and became a great nation, powerful and numerous. But the Egyptians mistreated us and made us suffer, subjecting us to harsh labor. Then we cried out to the LORD, the God of our ancestors, and the LORD heard our voice and saw our misery, toil and oppression. So the LORD brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm, with great terror and with signs and wonders.” (Deuteronomy 26:5-8).¹⁴⁴

The opening phrase, *Arami ovaïd avi* presents complex grammatical problems.

There are two different “standard” translations:¹⁴⁵

“My father was a wandering Aramaen...”¹⁴⁶

“An Aramean (Laban, Jacob’s uncle) tried to destroy my father.”¹⁴⁷

A lengthy exegesis of the text quoted above concludes with the last phrase, “And with wonders” and explains, “This refers to the plagues, as it is written, ‘And I will show you wonders in the heavens and on the earth, blood and fire and columns of smoke.’”

(Joel 3:3.)¹⁴⁸ This is the segue to the discussion of the Ten Plagues.

The Ten Plagues

This section is based on the story from Exodus that details the many ways in which God persecutes Pharaoh and the Egyptians because Pharaoh will not free the Israelites. (Exodus 7 –12.) Each time Pharaoh refuses to release the Israelites, another plague is enacted. Here is the list of the plagues:

Dam – Blood (Exodus 7:19).

¹⁴⁴ This text was used when Israelites would bring Bikkurim – First Fruits – to the Temple in Jerusalem. See Guggenheimer. *Scholar’s Haggadah*. p. 287.

¹⁴⁵ For a detailed explanation see *The Scholar’s Haggadah*. pp. 288-289.

¹⁴⁶ *The Feat of Freedom*, pp. 44-45.

¹⁴⁷ *JPS Commentary – Haggadah*. Tabory. P. 33-34.

¹⁴⁸ *The Feat of Freedom*, pp. 56-57.

Tzfardeah – Frogs (Exodus 8:1).

Kinim – Lice (Exodus 8:12).

Arov – Swarms (Exodus 8:20).

Dever – Cattle Plague (Exodus 9:6).

Sh'chin – Boils (Exodus 9:8).

Barad – Hail (Exodus 9:22).

Arbeh – Locusts (Exodus 10:12).

Hoshech – Darkness – (Exodus 10:21).

Makat B'chorot – Death of the Firstborn – (Exodus 12:29).

The *Feast of Freedom* Haggadah includes an interesting discussion of the way in which the plagues showed that the gods of Egypt were no match for the God of the Israelites. Turning the Nile River into blood was an attack on the Divinity of the River. The plague of frogs was devastating because frogs were worshipped as a sign of fertility. The disease of the cattle underscored that the sacred ram, goat and bull did not truly have Divine statues. The attack of locusts was a sign that the sacred beetle was not immune to harm. The darkness symbolizes the manipulation of Ra, the Sun God. The hardening of Pharaoh's heart by the Lord is proof that even the Pharaoh cannot stand up to YHVH. The killing of the first born of Egypt demonstrates God's ultimate power over the forces of Life and Death.¹⁴⁹

The reading of the Ten Plagues is accompanied by a long established ritual in which each person at the Seder removes a drop of wine from his/her wine glass as each plague is recited. Most people use their pinky finger for this task, putting the wine drops

¹⁴⁹ *The Feat of Freedom*, p. 58, n. 142.

on the side of the plate in front of them. The common explanation for this custom is that we diminish the wine in our cups (wine is a symbol of joy) because our liberation came at the cost of Egyptian suffering.

The proof text that is given for this interpretation is Proverbs 24:17: “If your enemy falls, do not exalt.” However, the earliest existing accounts of this ritual – fourteenth and fifteenth centuries - state that the wine taken from the cups represents the suffering the Israelites were spared and includes a hope that those who hate Jews will suffer instead of us (the Jews).¹⁵⁰

This dichotomy between a “politically correct” explanation for a text or ritual and a darker, more realistic explanation finds expression in other parts of the Haggadah as well as in this section, as we will see. The Jewish People were a nation without a homeland for 2,000 years, a nation harried and persecuted almost all over the world. Such a situation is bound to create anger, despair, and hatred. These are not feelings that can be expressed in a house of worship. However, in one’s home, with one’s closest family and friends, perhaps it is possible to let off steam without bringing about more problems. The Seder offers a perfect opportunity to express dark feelings without fear of persecution. Until recently, non-Jews were rarely found around the Seder table.

The establishment of the modern State of Israel changed the playing field for most Jews around the world. As a result, the way in which many Seders are conducted today reflect this new reality. Non-Jews today are not usually the enemy; Jews and non-Jews can break bread together and can share a Passover Seder. However, the anti-Christian aspects of the Seder liturgy have had to be suppressed or reinterpreted in order to make

¹⁵⁰ Hoffman and Arnow, *My People’s Haggadah*, vol. 2, p. 45, n.12 and p. 250.

this sharing possible. We will be looking at how these adjustments have been made in the section in this chapter on opening the door for Elijah.

Dayenu

The litany of thanksgiving, *Dayenu* (it would have been enough) directly follows the recitation of the Ten Plagues. *Dayenu* is a list of the many ways in which God blessed the Israelites (and by extension, the Jewish People.)¹⁵¹ This liturgy is recited twice, first as a responsive song with a “Mi Sinai”¹⁵² melody, and then as an affirmative restatement of God’s many blessings to the Jewish People.

There is no known authorship for the Mi Sinai melody for *Dayenu*. In printed collections of music for the Seder, if any attribution is given, it may say “folksong.”¹⁵³ The truth is, even the ethnic background of the folksong is unknown, although it is most likely of Ashkenazic origin since Sephardic Jews have a different setting, which is attributed to a folk melody from Sarajevo.¹⁵⁴ *Dayenu* is a singer-friendly melody and the refrain in Hebrew, “Dayenu” is simple enough for anyone to grasp, especially since there are 14 opportunities to do so in the traditional text (which actually has 15 verses.) The traditional text for Dayenu in English follows

¹⁵¹ The modern collective term for the descendants of the Biblical Abraham and Sarah is “Jewish People” or “Jewish Community.” The term “Israelite” refers to the community of descendants of Abraham and Sarah who came out of Egypt and made a communal covenant with YHVH at Mt. Sinai. In discussing participation in the Seder, the differentiation between the Biblical and Modern terms may get blurred because of the Haggadah’s direction that each person taking part in the Seder should feel as though s/he had personally participated in the Exodus from Egypt.

¹⁵² A “Mi Sinai” melody is a melody that is virtually universal for a particular piece of liturgy. The Hebrew term “Mi Sinai” means “from Sinai.” Mt. Sinai was where the Israelites made a communal covenant with YHVH and received the Ten Commandments. Therefore, anything labeled “Mi Sinai” is understood to mean that the music or liturgy, while not actually given at Mt. Sinai, has a universal “stamp of authority/approval.”

¹⁵³ Velvel. Pasternak, *The International Jewish Songbook*. Cedarhurst, NY; Tara Publications, 1994, p. 204.

¹⁵⁴ Chaim Parchi, *Holiday Songs in the Sephardic Heritage*. Brookline; C.P. Music Publications, 1992, p. 30.

How many levels of favors has the Omnipresent One bestowed upon us:

If He had brought us out from Egypt, and had not carried out judgments against them, Dayenu.

If He had carried out judgments against them, and not against their idols Dayenu.

If He had destroyed their idols, and had not smitten their first-born Dayenu.

If He had smitten their first-born, and had not given us their wealth Dayenu.

If He had given us their wealth, and had not split the sea for us Dayenu.

If He had split the sea for us, and had not taken us through it on dry land Dayenu.

If He had taken us through the sea on dry land, and had not drowned our oppressors in it Dayenu.

If He had drowned our oppressors in it, and had not supplied our needs in the desert for forty years Dayenu.

If He had supplied our needs in the desert for forty years, and had not fed us the manna Dayenu.

If He had fed us the manna, and had not given us the Shabbat Dayenu, it would have sufficed us!

If He had given us the Shabbat, and had not brought us before Mount Sinai Dayenu.

If He had brought us before Mount Sinai, and had not given us the Torah Dayenu

If He had given us the Torah, and had not brought us into the land of Israel Dayenu.

If He had brought us into the land of Israel, and had not built for us the Temple Dayenu.”¹⁵⁵

¹⁵⁵ Dayenu English text. <http://www.sichosinenglish.org/cgi-bin/calendar?holiday=pesach11101> (adapted by Rabbi Jo David, 12/30/13). Accessed Dec. 11, 2013.

Many Liberal Haggadot shorten the list to 11 things for which to be thankful. The items generally expurgated are:

“If He had destroyed their idols, and had not smitten their first-born...

If He had smitten their first-born, and had not given us their wealth...

If He had given us their wealth, and had not split the sea for us. . . .”¹⁵⁶

A unique Sephardic custom that is slowly making its appearance in Ashkenazic Seders is the use of scallions to hit one another while singing the refrain, “Dayenu.”¹⁵⁷ This is said to be related to the passage in Numbers in which the Israelites respond to seeing manna with memories of food from “the old country” (Egypt).¹⁵⁸ The mention of leeks in the verse is probably the link to scallions. (Being hit with a leek would hurt. It would also be expensive. Bunches of scallions are cheap and makes it possible for everyone to have their own “leek.”) The hitting of one another with a scallion is reminiscent of the slavery of the Israelites and the cruelty of the overseers with their whips. This custom also focuses the attention of the children at the Seder and involves them in a way that is fun and even a little naughty, since they are permitted to hit anyone they can reach, even their parents!

Dayenu first makes its appearance in *Siddur Saadiah* (920 C.E.)¹⁵⁹ although scholars once thought that this section of liturgy was one of the earliest parts of the Haggadah.¹⁶⁰ While there are a number of reasons for this, the most suggestive one is the

¹⁵⁶ *The Feat of Freedom*, pp. 60-61.

¹⁵⁷ Rahel Musleah, *A Passage to Jewish India and Beyond. From Portugal to Persia: Passover Customs from Around the World*. <http://www.rahelsjewishindia.com/page5/page22/page22.html>.

¹⁵⁸ See Numbers 11:5.

¹⁵⁹ Hoffman and Arnow. *People's Passover Haggadah*, p. 67.

¹⁶⁰ Taboury, *JPS Haggadah Commentary*, pp. 45-46.

similarity of Dayenu to *Psalm 136*, a responsive litany of God's goodness to the Jewish people. The section below deals specifically with the Exodus from Egypt:

Who struck down the firstborn of Egypt,
His steadfast love is eternal;
and brought Israel out from among them,
His steadfast love is eternal;
with a mighty hand and outstretched arm,
His steadfast love is eternal;
Who split apart the Sea of Reeds,
His steadfast love is eternal;
and brought Israel through the midst of it,
His steadfast love is eternal;
Who hurled Pharaoh and his army into the Sea of Reeds,
His steadfast love is eternal;
Who led His people through the wilderness,
His steadfast love is eternal" (Psalm 136:10-16).

Following the singing of *Dayenu*, there is a brief narrative recapitulation of the *Dayenu* text. In alternative Haggadot, those designed with a particular political or social agenda, an additional text for Dayenu addressing the concerns of the particular group is often incorporated into this section of the Haggadah. For example, *The Ma'yan Passover Haggadah*, a modern feminist Haggadah, follows *Dayenu* with this reading by everyone at the Seder: (quoted in part.)

If we speak truthfully about the pain, joys, and contradictions of our lives,
If we listen to others with sensitivity and compassion,
If we challenge the absence of women in traditional texts, chronicles of
Jewish history,
and in the leadership of our institutions, *dayeinu*.¹⁶¹

Explanation of the Pesach, Matzah and Maror

This section begins with a statement from Mishna Pesachim 10:5:

¹⁶¹ *The Journey Continues, The Ma'yan Passover Haggadah*, ed. Tamara Cohen, New York; Ma'yan: The Jewish Women's Project, 2002, p. 73.

Rabban Gamaliel used to say: Whoever does not mention these three things on Passover does not discharge his duty, and these are they: the Pesach-offering, matzah and maror [bitter herb].

This statement seems to be derived from Exodus 12:24-27:

Obey these instructions as a lasting ordinance for you and your descendants. When you enter the land that the LORD will give you as he promised, observe this ceremony. And when your children ask you, “What does this ritual mean to you?” then tell them, “It is the Passover sacrifice to the LORD, because he passed over the houses of the Israelites in Egypt and spared our homes when he struck down the Egyptians.”

At this point in the Seder an explanation of the Pesach, Matzah and Maror is presented. Each item is referenced by a Biblical verse. A unique custom attached to this ritual is that although the leader points to the matzah and the maror before explaining the meaning, the leader does not point to the lamb shank bone or the beet. The explanation given for not pointing to the shank bone is that it would make one sad to be reminded that it is no longer possible to take part in the Pesach Offering at the Temple in Jerusalem.¹⁶²

An interesting aspect of this custom is that while most Haggadot include instructions about the ritual actions that are to be taken during the Seder, Haggadot are not consistent about the tradition of not pointing to the Pesach, while pointing to the Matzah and Maror. A comparison of three “traditional” Haggadot illustrated this point vividly. In the *ArtScroll Haggadah*, a right wing Orthodox Haggadah, directions are given NOT to point at the Pesach and to point to the Matzah and the Maror.¹⁶³ In the *Polychrome Historical Haggadah*, a “right of center” Conservative Haggadah, there is no

¹⁶² I was unable to find any published reference explaining this custom and my colleagues were not able to offer assistance on this point. The custom of not pointing to the Pesach is ubiquitous and part of a tradition of oral teachings about Jewish customs which are so common that they need not be explained. (But of course, they do!)

¹⁶³ *ArtScroll Haggadah*. pp. 142-143.

direction about how to treat the Pesach, but there are directions to point to the Matzah and the Maror.¹⁶⁴ In *The Feast of Freedom*, a liberal Conservative Haggadah, there are no directions about how to deal with the Pesach, Matzah and Maror.¹⁶⁵

In my efforts to uncover the mystery of this section of the Haggadah, several colleagues, in replying to my request for help, explained that they have always pointed to the Pesach. Some even lift it off the table! This variation in printed and actual practice speaks quite loudly to the flexibility that is afforded the leader of a Seder.

Whether pointed out, lifted or not, at this point in the Seder the leader or a participant recites the following:

Pesach. Why was it that our forefathers ate the lamb of the Paschal Offering when the Holy Temple still stood? It was eaten to commemorate the miracle when the Holy One Blessed Be He “passed over” the houses of our forefathers in Egypt, according to the verse in Exodus (12:27): “and you shall tell them, ‘It is the Passover sacrifice to the LORD, who passed over the houses of the Israelites in Egypt and spared our homes when he struck down the Egyptians.’ Then the people bowed down and worshiped.”¹⁶⁶

The leader of the Seder points to the matzah and then reads the following:

Matzah. This Unleavened Bread which we eat, why do we do so? It is because there wasn’t time enough for the dough of our forefathers to ferment before the Supreme King of Kings, the Holy One Blessed be He, revealed Himself to them and redeemed them, even as the verse in Exodus explained, “With the dough the Israelites had brought from Egypt, they baked loaves of unleavened bread. The dough was without yeast because they had been driven out of Egypt and did not have time to prepare food for themselves.” (Exodus 12:39).¹⁶⁷

The leader or a reader points to the Maror and recites:

¹⁶⁴ Freedman. *Polychrome Haggadah*. pp. 54-55.

¹⁶⁵ *The Feat of Freedom*, pp. 66-67.

¹⁶⁶ Haggadah text from the *Polychrome Haggadah* (translation of Exodus 12:27 adapted by Rabbi Jo David).

¹⁶⁷ Ibid.

Maror. This bitter herb which we eat, why do we do so? It is because the Egyptians made the lives of our ancestors in Egypt a miserable, bitter existence. Just as the Torah informs us, “Ruthlessly they (the Egyptians) made life bitter for them (the Israelites) with harsh labor involving mortar and bricks and with various tasks in the field”(Exodus 1:14).¹⁶⁸

After explaining these three symbols, the Haggadah continues with Rabban

Gamaliel’s statement from Mishna Pesachim 10:5:

In each generation every person should regard himself as having been personally redeemed from Egypt, as it is said: “And you shall tell your son in that day, saying: ‘It is because of what the Lord did for me when I came forth out of Egypt.’ (Exodus 13:8). For it was not only our ancestors whom the Holy One, Blessed be He redeemed, but us too, as it is said, ‘He brought us out of there so that He might bring us to the land He promised our ancestors’” (Deuteronomy 6:23).

This statement is at the heart of Passover’s universal message of freedom for all people. The Hebrew is very clear. It reads, “Every person,” not “every Jew.” Thus Rabban Gamaliel is transforming the particularistic exodus experience of the Israelites into a model for all people who are oppressed.

Having read this manifesto of freedom, everyone at the table lifts a glass of wine and reads together the conclusion of Rabban Gamaliel’s statement:

“Therefore it is our duty to thank, praise, laud, glorify, exalt, honor, bless, extol, and adore The One Who performed all these miracles for our ancestors and for us; God brought us forth from bondage into freedom, from sorrow into joy, from mourning into festivity, from darkness into great light, and from servitude into redemption. Therefore let us acclaim The Holy One with a new song, ‘Hallelujah!’”¹⁶⁹

Everyone sets down his or her cup of wine without drinking.

¹⁶⁸ Ibid.

¹⁶⁹ This is an edited text from a variety of sources. It illustrates the way in which gender neutral and alternative God language is often used in Liberal and Alternative Haggadot. While most Traditional Haggadot continue to use masculine pronouns and imagery when God is presented, most Liberal Haggadot use gender neutral language. Feminist Haggadot may also use feminine imagery and pronouns when speaking of God. Some Alternative Haggadot use creative terms like “Holy One of Blessing” or “Creator”. This range of creative God language and imagery is also found in the siddurs (prayer books) of non-Traditional Jewish Movements. JD

Psalms of Praise (The Beginning of Hallel)

The leader reads or sings (or has others read or sing) Psalms 113 and Psalm 114.

The Second Cup

After the singing of Psalm 114, the leader lifts a cup of wine and recites a prayer giving thanks to God for redeeming the Israelites from Egypt. A reflection on drinking the second cup of wine is read silently or aloud. This reflection focuses on the Biblical verse “I will deliver you from bondage.” (Exodus 6:6). The short blessing over wine is sung or read and everyone drinks some wine while reclining to the left. This concludes the Maggid section.

Rachtza (Washing)

This is the second hand washing. It is performed by everyone at the table. Ritual hand washing is not a cleansing action. One’s hands should be clean before performing Rachtza. The purpose of Rachtza is to impart a spiritual component to a biological act.

There are numerous instances in Jewish ritual practice in which a biological or mundane act is given a spiritual meaning. Saying the *Shehecheyanu* (a prayer of thanksgiving) when wearing a new piece of clothing is just one of many such rituals. Rachtza is an obligation for any meal at which bread made with water (as opposed to a fruit bread or sweet bread) is eaten. Using a special pitcher filled with water, one holds one’s hands over a bowl and pours water three times over each hand. Then one recites the ritual blessing over hand washing while drying one’s hands. The laws for hand washing are *d’rabbanan* and are described in the Tur and the Shulchan Aruch.¹⁷⁰ It is traditional not to speak after washing one’s hands until one recites the blessing over the bread (the

¹⁷⁰ Cited in Klein, *Jewish Practice*, p.49.

matzah in this case.) Some people have the custom of humming or singing a niggun (spiritual song without words) until the leader recites the prayer over the bread.

Motzi (to bring forth) and Matzah (the unleavened bread)

As noted earlier, there is a disagreement about whether motzi and matzah are separate steps or a single step of the Seder. Having performed Rachtza, the leader lifts the plate with the three matzot and says two blessings one after another. The first is the blessing over bread (motzi) which, for this occasion is said over the matzah. This is a *bracha*¹⁷¹ (blessing) of appreciation. The blessing gets its name from the Hebrew phrase in the blessing, “*hamotzi lechem min ha-aretz*” – Who brings forth bread from the earth.” When eating bread during a regular meal, only the motzi is required. However, one of the laws of Passover has to do specifically with eating matzah. For this reason, at the Seder, after the blessing over bread, a *bracha* for the commandment to eat matzah is recited. A piece of matzah is eaten after this second blessing. It is a tradition to lean to the left – as though reclining on a banquet – while eating the matzah. This reflects the Seder’s Roman antecedents.¹⁷²

¹⁷¹ In English speaking Jewish communities there is a great deal of mixing of Hebrew, Yiddish and English terminology. The Hebrew word “bracha” means “blessing. In Yiddish the word is pronounced “brucha.” The term “blessing” is also used. Some blessings are referred to by the object of the blessing. For example, the blessing over bread is almost universally referred to as the “motzi” because the blessing ends “ha motzi lechem min ha’aretz” – who brings forth (motzi) nourishment from the earth.” It is also common for Jews in non-Orthodox communities to switch freely from Sephardic pronunciation of Hebrew words to Ashkenazic pronunciation often in the same sentence. Sephardic pronunciation is the standard for Modern Hebrew as spoken by most Israelis. Ashkenazic pronunciation is used by Jews from Eastern Europe. “Shabbat” is the Sephardic pronunciation of this festival;” Shabbos” is the Ashkenazic pronunciation.

¹⁷² The basic structure of the Seder is based on the Roman banquet. Guests would semi recline on long banquets as they ate an extended meal that began with appetizers – usually vegetables – dipped in vinegar or salt water. There would be drinking and a great deal of discussion about a wide variety of topics. Only free people (certainly not Israelites) could partake of these banquets. When we lean while eating matzah, we mimic the actions of free people who would have been able to participate in the Roman banquet.

Maror (Bitter)

Jews are commanded to eat a bitter vegetable or herb after the eating of matzah. Horseradish or Romaine lettuce is often used. The bitter herb is dipped (the second dipping)¹⁷³ in charoset.¹⁷⁴ A blessing for the performance of the mitzvah of eating maror is recited and the maror and charoset are eaten together.

As mentioned earlier, the actual composition of charoset varies from one Jewish community to another. The two constants are that there must be a chunky or pasty quality to charoset and it must have some sweetness in order to offset the bitterness of the bitter herb. When traveling in Turkey recently, I ate something similar, a very ancient recipe called *cigkofte* – raw kofte - which has a pasty texture like Sephardic charoset but which is very spicy and is made with raw beef rather than with fruit.

Tradition teaches that charoset reminds Jews of the mortar that was used to build the storehouses of Pithom for the Pharaoh Ramses II. However, charoset is not mentioned in the Torah. It first makes its appearance in the Mishna and then later, and in greater detail, in the Talmud.¹⁷⁵

Korech (Binding)

This is a sandwich made of matzah, maror and charoset. Known more colloquially as the Hillel sandwich, the tradition of eating matzah and maror together is mentioned in the Talmud as being related to the passage in Numbers: "...they shall eat it with

¹⁷³ In the Four Questions, one of the questions is "On all other nights we don't dip even once; why on this night do we dip twice?" The first dipping is the parsley in salt water; the second is maror in charoset.

¹⁷⁴ Charoset is a mixture of nuts, fruits, wine and cinnamon. It is supposed to resemble the mortar that the Israelites used to build the storehouses at Pithom under the command of the Pharaoh Rameses II.

¹⁷⁵ Mishna Pesachim 10:3; Tractate Pesachim 114a -116a.

unleavened bread and bitter herbs.”¹⁷⁶ It is said that Hillel also added a piece of the Pascal offering to this “sandwich.”¹⁷⁷ After the destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem in 70 C.E., charoset was introduced to substitute for the lamb. No special blessing is included in this ritual action.

Shulchan Orech (The Prepared Table)

Dinner is eaten. At some Seders, the meal begins with a roasted or hardboiled egg dipped in salt water. There are various interpretations about why the egg is eaten. A traditional explanation is that the egg represents the festival offering, the *Korban Hagigah*. When the Temple was in operation, two different sacrifices were brought on the first night of Pesach: the *Korban Hagigah*, the festival sacrifice, and the *Korban Pesach*, the paschal offering. One would eat the *Korban Hagigah* and then the *Korban Pesach*. Today, at the beginning of the dinner, eating the boiled egg, a food associated with the meal of consolation that is served after a funeral, expresses sorrow over the inability to partake in the *Korban Pesach*. The saltwater represents tears of sorrow. Eating the egg at the Seder became part of Jewish law in the 19th Century through the rulings of the Ben Ish Chai (Rabbi Yosef Haim of Baghdad – 1833-1909) (covering the actions of Sephardic Jews) and the *Mishna Berura*, the authoritative guide to Ashkenazic Halachah written by Rabbi Yisrael Meir Kagan, 1839-1933.¹⁷⁸

Another explanation for eating the egg is that the egg serves as an hors d’oeuvres typical of a Roman Banquet. Yet another possibility is that because eggs are associated

¹⁷⁶ See Numbers 9:11.

¹⁷⁷ B. Pesachim 115a.

¹⁷⁸ Salt water. <http://www.dailyhalacha.com/m/halacha.aspx?id=853>. Accessed Jan. 8, 2014.

with spring – renewal/rebirth, they are included to remind participants of these themes in the Seder¹⁷⁹.

During dinner, the leader hides the Afikomen, the half piece of matzah that was set aside during Yachatz. Conversation at dinner can be either casual or directed, or a combination of both. Often between the entrée and dessert the leader may initiate a conversation with all the participants about some issue raised by the Seder liturgy and themes. These talking points are chosen by the leader based on the background, interests and ages of the people at the Seder Table. One popular theme for discussion has to do with the way in which each person feels “enslaved” by something in his/her life – i.e., a dead end job, health issues, an addiction.

It should be noted that many home Seders never get past the redeeming of the Afikomen. It’s not unusual for the first part of a Seder (with dinner) to run 3 hours or more. The Seder meal is traditionally quite elaborate with a number of different courses and many desserts. Additional wine may be consumed during the meal. Even when starting a little early, it can be close to 10 pm before dinner is finished. Not everyone has the stamina/interest to continue.

The second part of the Seder can take an hour or more unless the leader makes some judicious cuts. In traditional households, the Seder is always completed. Congregational Seders and those designed for the public are usually structured so that they do not run as long as traditional home Seders.

¹⁷⁹ Klein. *Jewish Practice*, p. 127.

Tzafun (Hidden)

During Step 4 – Yachatz (Dividing) the middle of three matzot is broken in half. After dinner, the hidden middle matzah, the Afikomen, must be found before the Seder can continue to its end. The search is usually restricted to the children attending the Seder. A prize is given to the child who finds the Afikomen. To prevent tears, in most cases prizes are given to all the children who hunt for the Afikomen. In some families, the children are permitted to “bargain” for the ransom to be paid for the Afikomen. After the Afikomen has been redeemed, a small piece is given to each person at the table to eat as “dessert.” If there is not enough to distribute, other matzah can be passed around. Some people have the tradition of taking a piece of the Afikomen and keeping it as a talisman against evil.¹⁸⁰

The derivation of the term “Afikomen” is somewhat uncertain. The traditional teaching is that the word “Afikomen” is based on the Greek words “epikomen” or “epikomion.” These words are understood to mean either songs to be sung after the meal (as in a Roman banquet) or “dessert.”¹⁸¹

The Mishna states: “One may not add Afikomen after the paschal meal.”¹⁸² The paschal meal refers to the eating of a piece of the sacrifice during the time that the Temple was in operation in Jerusalem. The lamb was supposed to be the last thing eaten during the Seder.¹⁸³ However, after the destruction of the Temple in 70 C.E., the Afikomen became the substitute for the lamb.¹⁸⁴

¹⁸⁰ Joshua Trachtenberg, *Jewish Magic and Superstition*, Cleveland: Meridian Books and the Jewish Publication Society, 1961, p. 134.

¹⁸¹ Y. Pesachim. 10:8; 37d.

¹⁸² Mishna Pesachim. 10:8.

¹⁸³ B. Pesachim 119b-120a.

¹⁸⁴ Ibid.

Barech (Blessing)

After eating any meal that includes bread made with water, the full *Birkat Hamazon* – Grace After Meals - must be recited. This law is derived from Deuteronomy 8:10: “When you have eaten and are satisfied, give thanks to the Lord your God for the good land that he has given you.” This law is discussed in both the Babylonian and Jerusalem Talmuds.¹⁸⁵

At the Passover Seder, the *Afikomen* is the last thing eaten. The third cup of wine is filled. The Grace After Meals begins with the chanting of Psalm 126, an insertion to the Grace After Meals on Shabbat and the Festivals. Then comes the traditional *Birkat Hamazon* with insertions for Passover and (if the Seder is taking place on the Sabbath) Shabbat liturgical insertions.

The Third Cup

At the end of the *Birkat Hamazon*, the blessing for wine is recited and the Third Cup of wine is drunk. Some people have the custom of reciting or reflecting on the intention of drinking the Third Cup prior to saying the blessing over the wine. The Third Cup is associated with the Biblical verse “I will redeem you with an outstretched arm and through extraordinary judgments.” (Exodus 6:6). The Fourth Cup is filled.

Additional Readings and Reflections

At this point, or after the welcoming of Elijah, some Haggadot add a selection of readings dealing with Jewish martyrdom and the Holocaust. It should be noted that this is not a universal practice. Some Haggadot also include the song *Ani Ma'amin*, a song based on the twelfth of Maimonides' *Thirteen Articles of Faith*.

¹⁸⁵ B. Berachot 21a; Y. Berachot V, 7, 11a.

“I believe with perfect faith in the coming of the Messiah. However long it takes, I will await His coming every day.” There is an oral tradition that Jews sang this song as they entered the gas chambers during the Holocaust.¹⁸⁶

Welcoming Elijah the Prophet and the Kos Eliahu (Elijah’s Cup)

In preparation for Hallel, the fourth cup of wine is poured. In addition, if it has not been previously filled, a special cup for the prophet Elijah (Elijah’s Cup) is filled and brought to the attention of the children. In some homes, a cup of water that has been placed on the table for the Prophetess Miriam is also indicated or discussed.

Families have different traditions about filling Elijah’s cup. Some families fill Elijah’s cup before the beginning of the Seder in order to prevent an interruption of the Seder that might “delay” the coming of Elijah. Other families pour the cup right before the opening of the door.¹⁸⁷ In *A Different Night*, a Haggadah published by the Hartman Institute, the practice of the 19th century Chassidic rebbe Naftali Tzvi Horowitz is described. At his Seder, each person poured some wine into the Kos Eliahu. This action was meant to symbolize the importance of each person taking responsibility for bringing about the Messianic Era through personal action. There is also the comment in this part of the Haggadah that while filling the cup, each person expresses a specific wish for a better year.¹⁸⁸

¹⁸⁶ *A Teacher’s Guide to the Holocaust: Traditional Jewish Music.*

<http://fcit.usf.edu/holocaust/arts/mustrad.htm>. Accessed Jan. 9, 2014.

¹⁸⁷ Guggenheimer. *Scholar’s Haggadah*. pp. 365-366.

¹⁸⁸ Noam Zion and David Dishon, *A Different Night: The Family Participation Haggadah*. Jerusalem; The Shalom Hartman Institute, 1997, p 139.

There is a long-standing tradition based on a verse in Malachi¹⁸⁹ that Elijah the Prophet will appear on the evening of the Seder to announce the coming of the Jewish Messiah. To engage the attention of the children, (if they haven't already fallen asleep) the children are shown that the special cup of wine for Elijah is full. After the ritual of opening the door for Elijah, everyone returns to the table and, lo and behold, Elijah's cup is no longer full! How this is accomplished varies in each family and is never discussed. (This is the Jewish version of Santa Claus coming down the chimney on Christmas morning, eating the cookies and leaving without anyone seeing him. It remains a source of awe until the child is about 7 years old.)

It should be noted that searching for the Afikomen and the ritual with Elijah's cup are practiced predominantly in Ashkenazic families and may not be practiced by Sephardic or Oriental Jews. Because the Seder is a home-based ritual, there are many variations on the Elijah ritual from one family to another, one country to another.

Opening the Door for Elijah

There are a number of different teachings about why a door is opened for Elijah. (It should be noted that even though Elijah's presence is expected at a *Berit Milah* (ritual circumcision) ceremony, there is no particular ritual related to Elijah's possible participation other than setting aside a chair for Elijah at the *Berit Milah* ceremony. This ceremony can take place in the home of the family or in a synagogue or social hall).

In his very interesting book, *The Historical Haggada*, Nachman Cohen notes that when there are customs of great antiquity, their origin is often forgotten and "reasons" must be found for them. He suggests that opening the door for Elijah is one of these

¹⁸⁹ See Malachi 3:23.

customs.¹⁹⁰ Cohen proposes two explanations for the custom of opening the door for Elijah:

One possibility is that the door is opened to demonstrate that this is a night during which God guards the National of Israel and that no Jew needs to fear being harmed.¹⁹¹ This is based on the Biblical verse that states that the night of the tenth plague (death of the firstborn) was a *leil shimurim* – a night of being guarded.

That was a night of vigil for the Lord to bring them (the Israelites) out of the land of Egypt; that same night is the Lord's one of vigil for all the children of Israel throughout the ages" (Exodus 12:42).

Cohen also refers to a text from Josephus that discusses the doors of the Temple being opened on the first night of Passover just after midnight.¹⁹² This suggests that opening the doors on the night of Passover was a long-standing tradition.

As Coponius, who we told you was sent along with Cyrenius, was exercising his office of procurator, and governing Judea, the following accidents happened. As the Jews were celebrating the feast of unleavened bread, which we call the Passover, **it was customary for the priests to open the temple-gates just after midnight.** When, therefore, those gates were first opened, some of the Samaritans came privately into Jerusalem, and threw about dead men's bodies, in the cloisters; on which account the Jews afterward excluded them out of the temple, which they had not used to do at such festivals; and on other accounts also they watched the temple more carefully than they had formerly done.¹⁹³

The practice of opening a door during the first night of Passover is also documented, though not as a universal custom, during the Geonic period (750-1034 C.E.) although this tradition is not specifically related to Elijah. Rather, it was related to the

¹⁹⁰ Nachman Cohen, *The Historical Haggadah*, Yonkers. Torah Lishmah Institute, 2002, p. 103.

¹⁹¹ Ibid.

¹⁹² Ibid.

¹⁹³ Josephus. *Antiquities of the Jews*, 18.2:2; <http://www.gutenberg.org/files/2848/2848-h/2848-h.htm#link182HCH0002>. Accessed Jan. 15, 2014.

verse in Exodus that the first night of Passover is a “night of vigil.” (Exodus 12:42). This custom was also observed by Christians.¹⁹⁴

The ritual of opening of the door of the home on Passover and the idea of Elijah’s imminent arrival seem is the second suggestion that Cohen presents.¹⁹⁵ after the statement in Zechariah 9:9¹⁹⁶ that a Messianic king would arrive on a donkey gave rise to illustrations in Medieval Haggadot that show Elijah blowing a shofar, riding on a donkey by himself and riding on a donkey with the Messiah.¹⁹⁷

A common explanation of opening the door for Elijah is that it was a defensive measure performed against the background of the blood libels fueled by the Catholic Church in Europe during the Passover/Easter season beginning in the 12th century during the Crusades. The most common charge of the blood libel was that Jews killed Christian children to use their blood for Passover-related rituals, especially the making of Matzah or the making of wine for Passover.¹⁹⁸ (Red wine is almost always used for Jewish rituals.)

The problem with this explanation, which is very popular in the Jewish community, is that this theory is extremely difficult to document. The best resource I could find was an article on line sponsored by the Conservative Movement, but the

¹⁹⁴ Hoffman. *My People’s Passover*, vol. 2, p. 149.

¹⁹⁵ *Historical Haggadah*, p. 103.

¹⁹⁶ “Rejoice greatly, Fair Zion; Raise a shout, Fair Jerusalem! Your king is coming to you. He is victorious, triumphant, yet humble, riding on an ass” (Zechariah 9:9).

¹⁹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁹⁸ The blood libel. <http://www.yivoencyclopedia.org/article.aspx/Passover>. Accessed Jan 10, 2014.

explanation, that Jews opened the door because of blood libels contains the words “I guess.” Hardly a strong scholarly support for this custom.¹⁹⁹

An interesting, and more scholarly reflection on the effect of the blood libel on Passover customs comes from an article about blood libels on the My Jewish Learning website. The article discusses the plight of Polish Jews in the 17th century during the Chmielnicki Pogroms, which decimated the Polish Jewish community. (Over 500,000 Polish Jews died during these pogroms.) Because of the scope of the disaster, Rabbi David Halevy Siegel, an important leader of the Polish Jewish community issued a ruling that in all communities in which Jews were under pressure from blood libels, white wine was to be used during Passover as a way to blunt the charge that the blood of Christian children was used for the wine served on Passover.²⁰⁰ There is no connection, however, between this custom and that of opening the door for Elijah.

My experience as a congregational rabbi and Jewish educator is that many Jews want to believe that there is a connection between opening the door on the night of Passover and the blood libels. I believe that the attachment to this explanation within the Jewish community is directly related to the Holocaust. The echoes of this devastating event are still very loud in the world today and are still “top of mind” in the Jewish community. Even if one didn’t actually live through the Holocaust, it is not difficult to imagine the desire of a desperate community to “prove” that it doesn’t deserve to be

¹⁹⁹ Rabbi Barry Dov Lerner, *Conservative Judaism: Passover Haggadah*.
http://en.allexperts.com/q/Conservative_Judaism-951/2010/1/Passover-Haggadah.htm. Accessed Jan 10, 2014.

²⁰⁰ Larry Domnitch, *Blood Libels*.
http://www.myjewishlearning.com/holidays/Jewish_Holidays/Passover/History/Medieval/Blood_Libels.shtml?p=2. Accessed Jan. 10, 2014.

persecuted. The commandment in the Haggadah that one should feel as though one was personally part of the Exodus from Egypt translates easily to the Holocaust experience. This is especially true in those families where opening of the door for Elijah is linked with Holocaust remembrance readings.

Whatever the reason for opening the door, it is an extremely important custom for many Jews. In some homes, the lights are lowered and not restored until the singing of Eliahu HaNavi, although this is not a universal practice. Prior to opening the door, all the participants at the Seder rise and recite the following: “Baruch Haba. Elijah! We greet and welcome you.”

Sh’foch Chamathcha – Pour Out Your Wrath

After this traditional welcome, the door is opened. Traditional Jews recite the following text, which is universally referred to as *sh’foch chamathcha* (pour out your wrath).

Pour out Your wrath upon the nations that don’t know You, and upon the governments that do not call upon Your name. For they have devoured Jacob and laid waste his dwelling place (Psalm 79:6-7).

Pour out Your fury upon them, and let the fierceness of Your anger overtake them (Psalm 69:25).

Pursue them in anger and destroy them from under Your heavens (Lamentations 3:66).

Klein, in *A Guide to Jewish Religious Practice*, states that this text was inserted during the Middle Ages under the influence of the blood libels in Europe and references Rabbi David Abudraham’s important halachic work *Abudraham Hashalem* (13th – 14th century).²⁰¹

²⁰¹ Klein. *Guide*, p.129.

Many liberal Jews perform the rituals with Elijah's cup and opening the door but do not recite this text because it is dissonant with modern feelings of ecumenism. Some modern liberal Haggadot attempt to address this problem by either completely excising the traditional text and replacing it with a more politically/socially correct liturgy or adding a more ecumenical text or commentary. An early example of this is Rabbi Leopold Stein's 1882 addition of a statement that speaks of reconciliation:

Pour out Your spirit [sh'fokh ruchahka] on all flesh

So all peoples will come to serve You;

With one accord and one language

Will Adonai's name be Sovereign.²⁰²

After closing the door and returning to the table, the song *Eliahu HaNavi* (Elijah the Prophet) is sung. Singing *Eliahu HaNavi* is not a universal custom and the text does not appear in every Haggadah. However, the popularity of this inclusion in the Seder is apparent if one undertakes a quick search on Google. There are multiple articles and YouTube videos titled, "Eliahu HaNavi for Passover."

In liberal and feminist-leaning Seders, a separate cup of water – the *Kos Miriam* (Miriam's Cup) may be set aside on the table for Miriam the Prophetess. In Jewish midrashic tradition, Miriam is associated with water. There are many different stories in the Torah that give rise to this idea. However, the most significant story is found in Numbers 20:1-2. In this text, Miriam dies in verse 1. In verse 2 the Israelites find themselves without water. Many midrashim make the connection between Miriam's

²⁰² *My People's Passover Haggadah*, vol. 2, p. 140.

virtue and the availability of water to the Israelites during her lifetime.²⁰³ In Seders where Miriam is recognized, a version of *Eliahu HaNavi* is sung about *Miriam HaN'viah*, Miriam the Prophetess.²⁰⁴

In the Reconstructionist Movement's Haggadah, *A Night of Questions* (2000) Elijah and Miriam are presented together in a section titled *The Cups of Miriam and Elijah, Drawing from the Present/Waiting for the Future*. The text positions Elijah as the harbinger of the future and Miriam as a symbol of Tikkun Olam, the personal obligation to participate with all people in repairing the world during one's lifetime.²⁰⁵

Hallel (Praise)

After the rituals related to Elijah (and perhaps Miriam) Psalms 115 – 118 are sung (Hallel.) The first two Psalms of Hallel, Psalms 113 and 114 were sung or recited right before dinner. The Psalms that are sung after dinner, Psalms 115 – 118 have a special designation. This part of the Hallel is called "The Egyptian Hallel." Traditionally, the Egyptian Hallel is followed by the blessing *Yehallelukha* (Praise).²⁰⁶ However, this does not appear in all Haggadot.

The reciting of Hallel is related to the ritual of the slaughter of the paschal sacrifice, the time during which, according to the Mishna, Hallel was recited.²⁰⁷ The singing of these psalms in the second part of the Seder has a Messianic overlay. Psalms

²⁰³ Tamar Meir, *Miriam: Midrash and Aggadah*. <http://jwa.org/encyclopedia/article/miriam-midrash-and-aggadah>. Accessed Jan 10, 2014.

²⁰⁴ See Appendix for text.

²⁰⁵ *People's Passover Haggadah*, vol. 2. p. 142.

²⁰⁶ Ibid p. 184.

²⁰⁷ Mishna Pesachim 5:7.

115-118 are collectively referred to as “The Egyptian Hallel.” Because Elijah, the herald of the coming of the Messiah has been welcomed, Psalms 115-118 are understood to also be associated with the coming of the Messiah. This is based on discussions in the Babylonian and Yerushalmi Talmuds.²⁰⁸

Psalms are meant to be sung. There are a great number of musical settings for the Psalms. At the Seder, the psalms may be sung or read, depending on the preference (and abilities) of the leader and the participants. Some sections of the Psalms for Passover have been set to special melodies and have become songs independent of the Seder. One of these is verse Psalm 118:5 – *Min Hametzar* (from the depths). The verse goes as follows: “From the narrow place, I called out to Adonai; He answered by setting me free.” The melodies for these Psalms vary by country and culture. There are major differences between Ashkenazic, Sephardic and Oriental melodies.

Psalm 118 ends with having verses 21-29 repeated. The leader sings the verse the first time and the participants in the Seder repeat the verse. The recitation of these verses is quite an early custom, mentioned in the Mishna in relation to the festival of Sukkot, perhaps the most important festival in Temple Times.^{209 210} In *The Scholar's Haggadah*, Guggenheimer provides a lengthy and interesting discussion of why these verses may have been repeated. However, this discussion is not pertinent to our topic.²¹¹

²⁰⁸ Guggenheimer, *Scholar's Haggadah*. pp. 364-365.

²⁰⁹ Mishna Sukkot 3:11.

²¹⁰ During Sukkot, not only were sacrifices of Thanksgiving made for the fall harvest, but the Priests began to pray for rain, an essential ingredient in assuring a spring harvest in a desert climate. In Israel, there is almost no rain from late April through the middle of September.

²¹¹ Guggenheimer, p. 313.

After singing the traditional Egyptian Hallel Psalms, Psalm 136 – *The Great Hallel* is sung. This psalm is antiphonal - in the form of a “call and response,” where the leader sings the “content” portion and the community sings the repetitive response. For example, Psalm 136 begins:

“Praise the Lord; for He is good,” (leader)

His steadfast love is eternal. (response)

Praise the God of gods, (leader) (leader)

His steadfast love is eternal.” (response)²¹²

The singing of Hallel in other festival settings always begins and ends with a blessing. Psalms 113 and 114 are part of the Passover evening service in the synagogue. The blessing before singing Hallel would always be said in the synagogue. This is probably the reason that it did not make its way into the Haggadah.²¹³ The blessings that follow the recitation of Psalm 136 vary from one Haggadah to another. Even their placement varies. For example, in the Polychrome Haggadah, the traditional blessing beginning *Yehallelukha* is completely absent. This is also true of the *Steinsaltz Haggadah*.²¹⁴ In the *Rav Kook Haggadah*, *Yehallelukha* is inserted between the end of Psalm 118 and the beginning of Psalm 136.²¹⁵ *The Feast of Freedom* also follows this custom.²¹⁶

The last part of the Hallel section of the Haggadah is the recitation of the prayer *Nishmat Kol Chai* (the breath of every living being). In modern Haggadot, this is a

²¹² See Psalm 136:1-2.

²¹³ *My People's Passover Haggadah*, p 184.

²¹⁴ Adin Steinsaltz, ed., *The Passover Haggadah*, Jerusalem; Carta, 1983, no page numbers.

²¹⁵ *Springtime of the World*, p. 137.

²¹⁶ *Feast of Freedom*. pp. 112-113.

pastiche of material that ranges from the Taanaitic Period (pre-Mishnaic – before 200 C.E.) to the Middle Ages (to 1499 C.E.) While this is a very traditional text, it is often skipped by the leader, especially in liberal Seders or at Seders at which there are a number of children whose ability to pay attention and participate may have evaporated by this point in the evening.

Some Haggadot insert traditional Passover songs here. Some of these are songs of praise for God (not Psalms) like *Adir Hu*, a doxology that praises God in alphabetic order. This is a song that has a refrain that is easy for participants to sing. Another Seder classic is *Had Gadya* – One Goat. This song, written in Aramaic, is an allegory about Israel's struggles with her ancient enemies – Assyria, Babylon, Greece, Rome and others – and Israel's ultimate redemption.²¹⁷

The singing of *Had Gadya* is the type of song that encourages families, especially those with children, to create unique rituals for singing this song. One popular way of singing this song is to sing it as quickly as possible. (In Aramaic, not easy!) Another custom is for people at the table to choose a character in the song (dog, cat, goat, Angel of Death) and to make an appropriate noise when their character is mentioned. Combined with singing this song at a good clip, this generally wakes people up toward the end of the Seder.²¹⁸

Nirtzah (Acceptance)

The concept of Nirtzah is that God has heard and accepted the prayers of the individuals participating in the Seder. Nirtzah can also be understood as each individual's

²¹⁷ *Feast of Freedom*, p. 128.

²¹⁸ This custom was brought into our family by my son, Rabbi Justin David.

acceptance of personal responsibility to work for a world in which there will be peace and wholeness.

The Fourth Cup of wine is poured. The reflection on the fourth cup relates to the promise, “I will take you to be My people and I will be your God.” (Exodus 6:7). The blessing is recited and the wine is drunk while reclining. At some Seders, songs *like Had Gadya* are sung here.

The Seder ends with a formulaic statement that the Seder has been properly performed and completed. It ends with the statement, *L’shana habah’ah birushalayim* – next year in Jerusalem. This is often sung enthusiastically to a Mi Sinai melody. Even in Jerusalem this statement is sung or recited. The Jerusalem that is being prayed for is a Jerusalem in the Messianic time when the world will be at peace.

At some Seders, *Hatikvah* (The Hope), the national anthem of Israel, is sung. Everyone stands for the singing of Hatikvah. Very few Haggadot have included the text of this song, but the host may insert the text for those who do not know the words. The JPS Haggadah Commentary notes that one of the earliest instances of Hatikvah appearing in print in an American Haggadah can be found in a promotional Haggadah printed by a commercial bank in 1927.²¹⁹

Some Final Comments about Haggadot and the Passover Seder

There are Haggadot representing the ideals of almost every political group, social action concept, and minority. Some of these are listed in the Bibliography. In these Haggadot, the traditional liturgy may be subject to modern midrashic commentary, may

²¹⁹ JPS Haggadah Commentary, p. 69.

be modified to reflect the group's point of view, or may have modern parallel texts. For example, in a feminist Haggadah one might find an alternative reading for "Dayenu."

"Had women been remembered equally with men but forgotten in the telling of the exodus, dayeinu?" (Would it have been enough?)²²⁰

Some families create their own Haggadah or their own supplement to a published Haggadah. In the Haggadah I created for my family, I included maps of the Israelites' journey from Egypt to the Promised Land so that we could better visualize the actual experience. My son's family has created a Haggadah supplement that includes illustrations that my grandsons created, an original Peanuts strip commenting on Passover, a collection of additional songs including the spiritual *By and By*, relevant articles from newspapers and material from the Talmud and other traditional sources about Passover. One year I attended a Passover Seder where we hung red streamers across the opening of the door to a patio. At the beginning of the Seder, we assembled on the patio and made our way to the table by parting the "Reed Sea."

Unlike synagogue liturgy, traditions and customs which are generally "set in stone," the Passover Seder has always been a religious and spiritual activity that is open to a great deal of interpretation, creativity and innovation. Perhaps this is why Passover is the most beloved of all Jewish festivals.

In the next chapter we will explore the way in which the Passover Seder became a focus for Christian Spirituality during Easter. We will also look at the ways in which this focus has been expressed in modern times.

²²⁰ *San Diego Women's Haggadah*, 2nd ed. San Diego; Women's Institute for Continuing Jewish Education, 1986, p 45.

Chapter 4 How the Changing Interfaith Landscape in America Led to the Development of the Last Supper Celebration – the Precursor to The Last Supper Seder

“Why is this night different from all other nights?”

When it comes to the Last Supper, this introductory statement to the Passover Seder’s “Four Questions,” takes on great significance for Christians. Was the Last Supper a Passover Seder or a Ritual Meal? Should Christians celebrate The Last Supper as a Seder in their homes and churches? Is doing so a religious right or an inappropriate borrowing of Jewish tradition and culture? Where do the boundaries between Christianity and Judaism lie? Are Jews unawakened Christians who just don’t get it, or are they a stubborn, stiff necked people who purposely refuse to accept the truth of Jesus’ message?

The calendrical proximity of Passover and Easter brings these questions into high relief. Unlike Chanukkah and Christmas, Passover and Easter are always celebrated close together. Unlike Christmas, which is always celebrated on December 25, in the West, Easter Sunday always falls on the first Sunday after the first full moon after March 20, the date of the Spring Equinox as calculated according to the Metonic Cycle, a method of calculating the full moon determined by the Greek astronomer Meton (5th century B.C.E.) Because this calculation is not completely accurate, it sometimes is out of sync with the actual astronomical data. In Western countries, Easter Sunday can be celebrated on any date from March 22 to April 25. The Eastern Churches follow a different calendar

based on the Julian rather than the Gregorian calendar, the one which is used for most secular purposes today. In addition, if Easter does not follow Passover, Easter is delayed.

221

Passover always begins on the 15th of Nisan – at the time of the full moon. The Jewish calendar is based on the astronomical lunar calendar. Since a lunar month is shorter than a solar month by approximately two days, every year the date of holidays gets “earlier” much like the Muslim calendar, which is also a lunar calendar. However, since the majority of Jewish holy days are agricultural in nature, it is necessary to adjust the calendar from time to time to make sure that the festivals fall during the appropriate seasons – for example, Passover in the spring, Sukkot, the fall harvest festival, in the fall.

This calendrical adjustment was originally done by the Sanhedrin. If the Sanhedrin felt that spring had not yet arrived, an additional month of 30 days (a leap month) would be added so that Passover would fall at the appropriate time – the beginning of the barley harvest in Israel. This adjustment process is still in effect. Instead of the Sanhedrin, a fixed calendar based on mathematical and astronomical calculations was instituted by Hillel II in the fourth century C.E. A 19 year cycle was established. Adar I, a 13th month of 30 days is added in the 3rd, 6th, 8th, 11th, 14th, 17th and 19th years of the cycle²²². In 2014, Adar I will be added at the beginning of February.

The significance of the calendrical relationship between Easter and Passover is profound. The Jewish festival of Shavuot (Pentecost in Greek) follows seven weeks after

²²¹ *Easter: How and when it is celebrated* .Religious Tolerance.org;
<http://www.religioustolerance.org/easter3.htm>. Accessed Jan. 6, 2014.

²²² Jewish Calendar. <http://www.jewfaq.org/calendar.htm>. Accessed Jan. 6, 2014.

the first day of Passover. The Christian holy day of Pentecost takes place seven weeks after Easter Sunday.

Passover and Easter are inextricably linked in a way that is unique. Not only is the calendrical association significant, but the events that link the two holidays bind them together for all time. The defining moments of Jesus' life and death are set against the backdrop of Jerusalem at Passover.

Passover is one of the three most important festivals in the Jewish calendar.²²³ Because he was Jewish, Jesus fulfilled the commandment to journey to Jerusalem to observe Passover. His betrayal, torture, death and resurrection set the stage for the foundation of Christianity. Against this backdrop, the questions that Christians ask about Jesus' Jewishness, the events during the Last Supper with his disciples and the relationship of Passover to Christianity are all understandable and important. Any fair minded Jewish person might be able to acknowledge the validity of Christian interest in Passover. However, the ability of Jews to look at this issue dispassionately is undermined by the Catholic Church's (and later the Protestant Church's) historical actions against the Jewish community, many of which took place around the holidays of Passover and Easter.

The Jews and the Catholic Church

Why wouldn't the Jews convert to Christianity? This was a very difficult issue for the Church, especially because Jesus was Jewish. Shouldn't Jews follow his teachings?

²²³ Passover, Shavuot and Sukkot – all originally harvest festivals – are named the Shalosh Regalim: The Three Pilgrimage festivals. Jews were required to journey to Jerusalem during these festivals to bring their sacrifices to the Temple. – Exodus 23:14-17; 34:18-23; Deuteronomy 16:1-17.

After all, Jesus was a rabbi. To the Church, the obstinacy of the Jewish people, their refusal to embrace Jesus' teaching, was incomprehensible. After all, didn't Jesus say, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me."²²⁴ The reasons why Jews do not accept Jesus as the Messiah is a complicated issue and the appropriate subject of a different dissertation.

The response of the Church to Jewish communities that refused to convert to Christianity was influenced by a variety of historical issues. The responses were almost always punitive. Disputations, Jewish communities forced to attend church and listen to sermons during which they were exhorted to convert to Christianity, martyrdom of Jewish community leaders and teachers, the charge of the collective guilt of the Jewish People for the death of Jesus – deicide, mass pogroms, the Inquisition, expulsion of entire Jewish communities from countries in which they had lived for generations, ghettoization, stigmatization, being forced to wear degrading symbols designating their Judaism, being deprived of almost all livelihoods, being banned from trade guilds and universities, genocide – nothing worked. Was there ever such a stiff necked people as the Jews?

In 1956, in Brooklyn, a first grade friend told me that we could no longer be friends because I had killed Baby Jesus. Later that year during a trip to Cape Cod, my family was asked to leave the cottage in which we were staying because the owners had "figured out" that we were Jewish and they didn't rent to Jews. In 1990, at a *Seminarians Interacting Conference* at Princeton University sponsored by the International Council of Christians and Jews, I was greeted by a Princeton student who told me that he had never

²²⁴ John 14:6.

met a Pharisee before. (He was serious.) Our group was also subjected to a “Welcoming” sermon in which the non-Christians in the group were exhorted to accept Jesus as our Savior. It’s one thing to inherit a history of anti-Semitism; it’s quite another to experience anti-Semitism.

The Second Vatican Council (1962-1965) under Pope Paul VI repudiated the Church’s long-standing teaching that the Jewish People bear collective guilt for the crucifixion of Jesus and stated that the Jewish People were not guilty of deicide.²²⁵ In recognition of this breakthrough, the Chad Mitchell Trio recorded the ironic *Ecumenical March* in 1965. The chorus explains, “We’re clean, we’re clean, The Vatican says we’re clean, we’re good and sweet and gentle too. We did no harm to you know who...”²²⁶ In 2011, in his book *Jesus of Nazareth*, Pope Benedict XVI explained that the Jewish People as a whole were not responsible for Jesus’ death.²²⁷ These efforts on behalf of a church that was silent during the Holocaust were welcome steps toward a process of reconciliation between Catholics and Jews. The extent to which these efforts affected the hearts and minds of Christians is not clear.

²²⁵*Declaration on the Relation of the Church to Non-Christian Religions: Nostra Aetate*, proclaimed by His Holiness Pope Paul VI on October 28, 1965, Article 4. http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_decl_19651028_nostra-aetate_en.html. Accessed March 12, 2014.

²²⁶ *Ecumenical March* lyrics. Chad Mitchell Trio., 1965, <http://www.lipwalk.com/lyrics/652618-ecumenicalmarch-chadmittelltrio.html>. Accessed Jan. 6, 2014.

²²⁷ Statement about deicide by Pope Benedict XVI. http://www.catholic.org/international/international_story.php?id=40576. Accessed Jan. 6, 2014.

Jews for Jesus and Other Evangelical Groups That Target Jews

Efforts to convert Jews to Christianity has been an on-going issue in interfaith relations in modern times. Since the 1970's²²⁸ these efforts have continued despite resolutions by some liberal Christian denominations to end this practice. In 1973, Martin "Moishe" Rosen, a Jewish convert to Christianity started "Jews for Jesus," a Christian organization focused on evangelizing Jews by teaching them that Yeshua (Jesus in Hebrew) is the Jewish Messiah. Rosen argued that Jesus' Messianic claim was predicted in the Tanach and that Jews for whom the Tanach was central had to believe that Jesus was the Messiah.²²⁹ For Jews who were ignorant about the basic tenets of their religion, this was a seemingly logical and persuasive argument. Jews who were being targeted were also told that they could be Jewish and Christian at the same time. For Jews who were dating or married to non-Jewish partners, this was an enticing statement, since at this time most of the organized Jewish community was not welcoming of interfaith couples and families. This has changed somewhat over the years.

At about this same time, other Christian missionaries and evangelicals launched a variety of different, and very successful campaigns targeted at converting Jews to Christianity. Jews weren't evil for not accepting Jesus as their savior; they just didn't understand that they were spiritually incomplete. Jews were told that they should

²²⁸ The social changes that began in America in the 1960's had many different effects on the social contract in America and the way in which people saw themselves with respect to their families, religious and racial groups and their communities. Active proselytizing of Jews right after the Holocaust was not possible. However, young adults experiencing "The Summer of Love," the Vietnam War and "Free Love," were more likely to question traditional ideas about religion, their religious heritage and who they could marry. This applied to Jews and Christians alike.

²²⁹ Stephanie Persin, *Christian-Jewish Relations: Jews for Jesus*, http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsourc/anti-semitism/Jews_for_Jesus.html. Accessed Jan. 6, 2014.

embrace the Jewish Jesus so that they could become “completed” Jews.²³⁰ Other groups began to package Christianity in Jewish clothing – Messianic synagogues complete with Torah Scrolls and the celebration of Jewish holidays, Messianic rabbis, Jewish Messianic music, Messianic “Yeshivot” and Messianic “Jewish” books.²³¹ There were even Messianic Haggadot for the celebration of the Passover Seder. Rabbis and cantors responded to this assault on the Jewish community by blocking admission into interfaith clergy groups to the leaders of “Messianic” organizations and by refusing to participate in events that included Messianic synagogues. As all this was taking place, intermarriage between Christians and Jews was on the rise.

Intermarriage in the Jewish Community

Intermarriage with non-Jews has always been part of the Jewish landscape. Traditionally, Jews who intermarried were treated as though they had died. They were cut off from the community and their birth families. The rate of intermarriage in America prior to 1970 was approximately 13%; (13% of Jews who married chose a non-Jewish spouse.)²³² It should be noted that a person who has a Jewish father and a non-Jewish mother would be included in this statistic as a non-Jew. There are no statistics that differentiate between someone with no Jewish background and someone with Jewish relatives. I think this makes a big difference, but that is the subject for another thesis.

²³⁰ Completed Jews. <http://www.catholic.com/quickquestions/if-jesus-was-a-jew-why-are-we-catholic> Accessed Jan 6, 2014.

²³¹ Messianic Congregations. International Alliance of Messianic Congregations and Synagogues. <http://iamcs.org/#/shalom> Accessed Jan 6, 2014.

²³² Intermarriage statistics. http://www.interfaithfamily.com/news_and_opinion/synagogues_and_the_jewish_community/Jewish_Inter_marriage_Statistics.shtml Accessed Jan. 6, 2014.

After 1970, the rate of intermarriage in the Jewish community began to rise. By 2001, the most recent statistic available, the rate of intermarriage in the Jewish Community in America was 47%.²³³ In small Jewish communities, the rates are much higher than the national average. The congregation I served in Fayetteville, Arkansas from 1998-2000 had a membership of about 100 families, 70 percent of whom were intermarried. This is relatively common in communities where the Jewish community is small. Fayetteville only had about 250 Jews in a 200 mile radius.

As a response to the growing intermarriage numbers, in October, 1983, the Reform Movement in America declared that the offspring of a mixed marriage, even when the mother was not Jewish, would be considered Jewish within the Reform Movement providing that appropriate Jewish education was given to the child.²³⁴ One of the motivating factors behind this ruling was the desire to keep intermarried families affiliated with the Jewish Community. The willingness of the Reform Movement in America to begin to address issues of intermarriage created an atmosphere in which some congregational rabbis were motivated to reach out to their Christian colleagues for the first time. In some communities, Christian and Jewish clergy formed “clergy councils” to facilitate coordinated action on community issues.²³⁵

²³³ Ibid.

²³⁴ CCAR Responsa, *Patrilineal and Matrilineal Descent*. <http://ccarnet.org/responsa/carr-61-68/> Accessed Jan. 7, 2014.

²³⁵ It is interesting to note that there is little published material available on the development of interfaith initiatives on the local level prior to 9/11. As a congregational rabbi working primarily in the New York area between 1991 and 2006, I found the local interfaith clergy groups in which I participated to be generally unfocused and ineffectual.

Jews and Christians Unite Over Social Action Issues

There were other way in which Jews and Christians came together during the mid-20th Century. This was particularly true with respect to the fight for Civil Rights for Black Americans and opposition to the war in Vietnam.

One outstanding interfaith leader was Rabbi Stephen Samuel Wise. Wise, a liberal rabbi, founded Stephen Wise Free Synagogue in Manhattan in 1907. The Free Synagogue was not a “dues free” congregation. Rather, it was established with the idea that the rabbi had “freedom of the pulpit” – the right to espouse any idea he felt was appropriate. In 1907, many synagogues required that their rabbi submit sermons to the board of directors for approval prior to delivering the sermon.²³⁶ According to New York City rabbinic oral law, Wise was offered the position of rabbi for Temple Emanu-El of the City of New York, a community whose members were extremely wealthy and socially prominent. When he was told that he would have to submit his sermons to the Board of Directors for their approval, Wise rejected the offer and founded Stephen Wise Free Synagogue.

Wise was politically astute and forward looking. In 1914, he co-founded the NAACP – the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People,²³⁷ and in 1922 he established the Jewish Institute of Religion – a non-movement affiliated rabbinical seminary to train liberal rabbis for American congregations.²³⁸ Two different rabbinical seminaries were offshoots of the JIR – the New York campus of Hebrew Union College (and later the entire college) and The Academy for Jewish Religion, a

²³⁶ Stephen Wise Free Synagogue. <http://www.swfs.org/about-us/history/> Accessed Jan 7, 2014.

²³⁷ Rabbi Stephen Wise. <http://www.worldjewishcongress.org/en/biography/51>. Accessed Jan 7, 2014.

²³⁸ Rabbi Stephen Wise. <http://americanjewisharchives.org/collections/ms0019/> Accessed Jan 7, 2014.

Jewish non-denominational seminary and my own alma mater. Wise was a liaison to President Woodrow Wilson and a close friend of President Franklin Roosevelt.

Another important Jewish leader with strong ties to the Christian community was Dr. Abraham Joshua Heschel. Heschel's writings caught the attention of Jews and non-Jews alike. His struggle to link modern spirituality to the words of the Torah resonated deeply for many people. For Heschel, concern for all people brought him actively into the struggle for Black Civil Rights and he marched with Martin Luther King, Jr. in Selma. Heschel was one of the few American religious leaders to speak out against the Vietnam War. His interfaith vision took him to the Vatican to meet with Pope Paul VI. They discussed the Vatican's revised rulings about the Jewish responsibility for the death of Jesus.²³⁹ Heschel's actions created a new model for interfaith cooperation at a time when there was a great deal of interfaith distrust and not much communication.

In America today, in many communities we take interfaith cooperation for granted. Many churches and synagogues sponsor programs in observance of Martin Luther King Jr. Day that focus on the relationship between Martin Luther King Jr. and Heschel.²⁴⁰ However, feeling comfortable with people of faiths other than one's own has not been easy, and progress has been slow.

In the late 1980's, when I was a rabbinic intern in a Reform synagogue in Manhattan, the idea of churches and synagogues sharing programming and arranging pulpit exchanges was very rare. In 1989, I mentioned to the Assistant Rabbi that I had

²³⁹ Abraham Joshua Heschel. http://www.encyclopedia.com/topic/Abraham_Joshua_Heschel.aspx. Accessed Jan 7, 2014.

²⁴⁰ Interfaith MLK Service. <http://www.ohio.com/news/remembering-martin-luther-king-jr-abraham-heschel-on-road-to-social-justice-1.457990>; <http://mishkan.org/story/heschel-king-festival>; Accessed Jan 7, 2014.

arranged to take my Confirmation Class (15-16 year olds) to a local church. We were going to meet one of the ministers and discuss the differences and similarities between Passover and Easter.

“You’re going to take them into a church?” the Assistant Rabbi said. He was clearly horrified. I explained that I would prefer that my students visit a church with me on a “supervised” visit and have time afterwards to debrief than to have them wander into a church on their own. The rabbi’s reaction was not unusual for the time. Jews and Christians stayed on their own turf.

By the early 1990’s, some communities in America had interfaith clergy groups – clergy of various backgrounds who would meet on a regular basis to work together on community projects. In some places, this produced interfaith Thanksgiving programs. In some communities, the interfaith clergy councils banded together for social justice projects – running a soup kitchen, organizing help for the homeless, responding to a natural disaster or some specific threat to the community.

In small communities, the local press often turned to the President of the Clergy Council for comments on religious headline news. In urban areas with large Jewish communities one might find a number of rabbis participating in such groups. In smaller communities, it was more common to have a number of Protestant ministers of various denominations and a single rabbi. Sometimes rabbis and ministers developed friendships that resulted in congregational visits – the rabbi and the Jewish community visiting a church one Sunday, and the minister and his or her flock visiting the synagogue for a Shabbat service. Some rabbis and ministers traded pulpits for a weekend. Occasionally there were workshops sponsored by both houses of worship focusing on Chanukkah and

Christmas or Passover and Easter. Today this type of sharing is relatively common. In the 1990's this type of sharing was in its infancy.²⁴¹

As Jews and Christians learned about one another, some good things happened. Jews began to understand that they didn't have to flinch when a Christian talked about Jesus. Christians learned that Judaism was the foundation of Christianity and that Jesus was Jewish. While these steps forward may sound unimportant today, in the 1990's these baby steps were a huge step forward in developing interfaith tolerance if not complete understanding.

The Relationship Between Judaism and Christianity

A trip to Ghana in early 2010 helped me to understand that Jesus' Jewishness was not a fact on the ground all over the world. New Year's Day, 2010 was a Friday. I had arranged to present a Shabbat Service in Akropong, Ghana at the home of Reverend Dr. Daniel Nyante, the founder of TIDAC –The Institute for Diasporan and African Culture. With us on that evening was the leader of Ghana's African Jewish Community, Alex Armah, approximately 300 Christians and the local Presbyterian Church Choir.

I had prepared a siddur (prayer book) so that there could be community participation. However, when I got up to begin the service, I realized that the ritual would be meaningless without some short introduction to Judaism. Almost no one participating that evening had ever met someone Jewish, not to mention a female rabbi.

²⁴¹ Virtually nothing has been published about this area of interfaith cooperation. These comments are based on my experiences serving a variety of congregations since 1988 and my work as a congregational mentor from 1997 to the present.

I began with a few introductory remarks about Judaism and at some point I said, “And of course, as you know, Jesus was Jewish and Jesus was a rabbi.” The silence was deafening. As I looked around the audience, it was clear that this was BIG news to most of the people there. They didn’t know what to make of my statement. From this experience, I learned that what is “accepted truth” in one community may not be even a twinkle in someone’s eye in another community. This was a lesson that I carry with me to this day.

This being said, the link between the Jewish and Christian religions is extremely important in many Christian denominations, especially with respect to the Tanach or, in Christian parlance, *The Old Testament*. For Christians who believe that the Bible is the literal word of God, the Biblical stories of Creation, Adam and Eve and Noah are all important foundational texts. For many Christian denominations, the writings of Isaiah and the other Biblical prophets are important because they are read as a foretelling of the coming of Jesus as the Messiah. The Book of Psalms serves as a fertile source of praise and worship of God for almost all denominations.

By the latter part of the 20th century in America, rabbis and Christian ministers had become more comfortable interacting with one another. As a result of these new relationships, and because of the growing rate of intermarriage between Christians and Jews, Jewish and Christian lay people began to be exposed to one another’s worship and holiday experiences. People began to ask, “Why can’t these songs, rituals, prayers and customs that belong to this other religion be part of my religious tradition?”

Christian Appropriation of Jewish Symbols and Customs

Some Christians adopted the custom of wearing a Magen David – a Jewish Star - because they thought it was “pretty” or because they wanted to show “solidarity” with the Jewish People. On a trip to Hungary in 1995, I visited a small synagogue that was in a village where the 3,000 Jews who had lived there for centuries had all died in the Holocaust. The synagogue had been restored as served as a museum and community center. The guide wore a Jewish star with a cross in the middle. I asked her why she wore that symbol. She explained to me that she was Christian – hence the cross – but that she wanted Jewish visitors to feel comfortable so she wore the Star of David also. The Jewish Star with a cross in the middle is a symbol that has become popular with “Jewish Christians” and is called the “Star Cross” or the “Messianic Cross.”²⁴² Because I understood that her intentions were good, I didn’t tell her that seeing a cross inside a Jewish star would make a Jewish visitor feel very uncomfortable.

Here in the United States, some Christians have taken on the custom of affixing a mezuzah (Jewish amulet) to their doorposts because they like the idea of having an amulet to protect them. There are companies that make special “Christian” mezzuzot that incorporate New Testament texts and Christian imagery.²⁴³

Some Christians have begun to wear a tallit (prayer shawl) for Christian worship because they believe that this was a “Biblical” garment. There are a number of companies that manufacture tallitot for Christians. These garments sometimes have the words

²⁴² Interfaith Jewelry. <http://www.seiyaku.com/customs/crosses/star.html>. Accessed Jan 7, 2014.

²⁴³ Christian mezzuzot. <http://christian-mezuzah.com> Accessed Jan 7, 2014.

“Jesus” and “Messiah” embroidered on them.²⁴⁴ When I was in Ghana in 2010, I attended a New Year’s Eve Evangelical prayer service. The minister leading the service was wearing a traditional tallit gadol (large tallit.) As the singing got more animated, he took off the tallit and began to wave it over his head in rhythm to the music. It was all I could do to keep myself from pulling it from his hands. I wanted to “repatriate” it by stealing it away from him. I was so offended by the use of this sacred Jewish item being used in this inappropriate (from a Jewish perspective) way. The feelings of anger and horror that I had in seeing a tallit used in this way were overwhelming. The fact that the minister didn’t know that his actions might cause someone Jewish distress was extremely troubling to me, but in Ghana there is almost no knowledge of Judaism so the minister likely had no idea that his actions might be considered inappropriate by someone Jewish. Also, given the miniscule Jewish population in Ghana, it is extremely unlikely that the minister would even consider that a Jewish person might be present in his church.

In America, many rabbis and people in the Jewish community view the appropriation of Jewish symbols, laws and culture as being disrespectful. Other rabbis, especially leaders in the Interfaith Movement that began to develop in the 1970’s saw this borrowing as a respectful coming together of all people and all faiths. This led to the formation of several seminaries that ordained ministers to work with people of various religious backgrounds. Some of these seminaries are still in operation today.²⁴⁵ The work

²⁴⁴ Tallitot for Christians. http://theshofarman.com/images/Christian_Tallit_2_Names-3.JPG. Accessed Jan 7, 2014.

²⁴⁵ The New Seminary. <http://www.newseminary.org>; All Faiths Seminary. <http://allfaithsseminary.org>; One Spirit Learning Alliance Interfaith Seminary. <http://onespiritinterfaith.org/seminary/overview>. Accessed Jan 7, 2014.

of these ministers has served to blur the distinctions between religious communities, especially Christian and Jewish communities.

Some communities, however, have not been open to this ecumenical spirit. In some parts of the country, local clergy councils may restrict membership to Christians only. In Fayetteville, Arkansas, where I had a monthly pulpit from 1998-2000, the local clergy council was not open to me or to the Unitarian Minister who worked on the University of Arkansas campus because we were not Christians. When the Mayor had his community Bible Breakfast for the local clergy, it was publicly announced that those clergy who did not accept Jesus as their savior were not invited.

9/11 – A New World Is Born

After 9/11 it became clear that there was a great need for more interaction and dialogue between Christians, Jews and Muslims who, prior to 9/11 rarely participated in interfaith community work. New organizations began to emerge to support the development of working relationships between “the three faiths of Abraham.” In 2010, the New York Public Library hosted a major exhibition, “The Three Faiths of Abraham” that focused on the calligraphic traditions of Judaism, Christianity and Islam.²⁴⁶ This program was sponsored primarily by the Coexist Foundation, an organization established in 2006 to “create understanding through education and innovation.”²⁴⁷

In 2011, the Jewish Community Center of Schenectady sponsored an interfaith exhibition, “Three Scribes: Friends in Art” featuring the work of a Jewish scribe, a

²⁴⁶New York Public Library Three Faiths Exhibit. <http://www.nypl.org/events/exhibitions/three-faiths-judaism-christianity-islam>. Accessed Jan 7, 2014.

²⁴⁷ Coexist. <http://coexistfoundation.org/> Accessed Jan 8, 2014.

Muslim scribe and a Christian calligrapher. The three artists created special works of art for this program featuring Hebrew, Arabic and English calligraphy and shared texts.²⁴⁸ Since 9/11 programs like these have taken place in many different venues throughout the United States and continue to do so.

The “new world” of interfaith engagement, while far superior to the isolation, prejudice and mistrust that characterized much of religious life in the United States until recently, is not without its difficult issues. Churches have been very welcoming to Jewish/Christian families. Until fairly recently, synagogues have been much less so. Christian churches, as has been noted, have a vested interest in the bringing Jews into “the fold.” Synagogues, on the other hand, are always fighting a dual battle against secularism and against the dominant religion in America – Christianity - for the minds and hearts of Jews and their families. It is not an exaggeration to say that within the Jewish community there is a “siege” mentality when it comes to the treatment of intermarried couples and families. It’s hard to be Jewish in America, and raising Jewish children with strong, positive Jewish identities is extremely difficult.

It’s for this reason that anything that looks or feels like Christian encroachment on Jewish customs or appropriation of Jewish music, symbols, prayers and rituals is met with some level of hostility or disapproval on the part of many rabbis and religious Jews. And yet, in this era of “we’re all one big family that worships the same God,” it’s difficult to tell one’s Christian friends that their use of Hebrew liturgy, ritual items or Jewish traditional music in a Christian worship service feels “not right” somehow. Which brings us to the question, “Why create a special Passover Haggadah for Christians?”

²⁴⁸ Three Scribes. <http://www.union.edu/news/stories/2011/09/faith-among-friends-three-scribes-discuss-their-calligraphic-art.php>. Accessed Jan 8, 2014.

The Last Supper Celebration: Prototype for A Last Supper Seder and Haggadah

From 1994-1997, I served as the rabbi of a small Reform Synagogue in Freeport, New York. In 1997 I received a call from a local Lutheran minister. She asked if I would organize and lead a Passover Seder for her church. My initial reaction was to say “no.” Instead, I asked her why her community wanted to have a Passover Seder. She explained that since Jesus was Jewish and his last meeting with his disciples was a Passover Seder, taking part in a Seder would help her congregants draw closer to Jesus as Easter approached. I explained to her that the Seder in the early First Century was not the Seder that Jews perform today and suggested that we meet to talk about what might be appropriate for her congregation.

The result of our discussions was an original liturgy and ritual that was presented at the church the week before Maundy Thursday. Titled *A Last Supper Celebration: Featuring a New Liturgy Based on Traditional Jewish Sources*, the program followed the general outline of a Passover Seder but gave a Christian twist to many of the rituals. Texts from both the Tanach and the New Testament were referenced. The program was designed to be led by a Christian minister and a rabbi or other Jewish educator. The Haggadah presented the material needed for congregational participation, but it did not incorporate the text of the rabbi and minister’s comments about various rituals.²⁴⁹

The program was extremely well received by the congregants and was covered by the local print media. Because of the warm reception of this program, it was repeated the following year although by then I had left the local synagogue.

²⁴⁹ See text for the *Last Supper Celebration* in the Appendix.

One of the important aspects of this program was that it was specifically tailored to a Christian audience while conveying a sense of a Jewish Seder. My partner in this endeavor, Pastor Kimberly Wilson, was asked to write up the program for the magazine *Lutheran Woman Today*. In her article, “A Transformed Heart,” Pastor Wilson addressed the issue of inappropriate borrowing from one religion to another.

I wanted to honor my congregation’s wish to learn more about the Jewish roots of Jesus’ institution of the Lord’s Supper, but I also knew that celebrating the Jewish holiday of Passover without respecting the integrity and development of Jewish tradition apart from Christianity would be problematic. Not only would such a celebration be religiously inaccurate, it would almost certainly be spiritually offensive to our Jewish neighbors and friends.²⁵⁰

Pastor Wilson went on to describe our philosophical approach to this project.

The finished product, titled “A Last Supper Celebration,” is not designed to be an interfaith seder (although those are valid experiences.) Instead, our liturgy borrows from the form of a seder and expresses Christian religious values and rituals while honoring the seder’s Jewish roots. We took the basic framework of the seder – the story of the Exodus, the four cups, the unleavened bread– and reinterpreted the, in Rabbi David’s words, as “vehicle for a more satisfying Christian spiritual link in with the Last Supper.”²⁵¹

Why would a rabbi seek to help Christians celebrate a Christian version of the Passover Seder? For many years, I have collected Passover Haggadot. In the 1980’s, I began to come across Haggadot specifically written for Christians.²⁵² Although I was not yet a rabbi, I was disturbed by Christian appropriation of this important Jewish ritual. As I began to work in synagogues as a Jewish professional, I came into contact with many people in interfaith marriages who were conflicted over using a traditional Haggadah at

²⁵⁰ Pastor Kimberly A Wilson, “A Transformed Heart,” *Lutheran Woman Today*, January/February 2001, p. 21.

²⁵¹ Ibid., p. 22.

²⁵² See Bibliography for a list of Haggadot for Christians and Christian Messianic Haggadot.

Passover. They were afraid that their Christian relatives would be put off by the “chauvinism” of the Jewish Haggadah and were searching for ways to make their observance of Passover more “ecumenical.” Haggadot written for Christians or incorporating the term “Yeshua” seemed to some of these people a way to bridge the “Jewish- Christian gap.”

From a rabbinic perspective, when one takes an authentic Jewish liturgy or ritual and changes it to meet a need for which it was not intended, the liturgy or ritual loses its Jewish character and purpose. At the same time, I understood the conflict faced at Passover/Easter by my intermarried congregants. It was for this reason that, when I got the call from Pastor Wilson, I was willing to see what might happen if one was to reinterpret the Haggadah and Seder for Christians, not as a Jewish/Christian hybrid, but as a truly Christian ritual with Jewish roots focused not on Passover, but on the Last Supper. My responsibility in our partnership was to provide the Jewish background; Pastor Wilson provided the doorway into Christian spirituality. Working together, we were able to create a liturgy and ritual that was satisfying for her community.

The event, while intended for Pastor Wilson’s community, was open to anyone who wished to attend. On the night of the event, both Christians and Jews participated. It was our hope that by opening the event to all people, both Christians and Jews would learn the shared heritage around the festivals of Passover and Easter. I also hoped that Jewish attendees would come to understand why Christians are so interested in Passover.

The first year that we offered the Last Supper Celebration (1997) not everyone in my congregation was happy with my involvement in this project. There were a number of people who were generally distrustful of relationships with non-Jews, especially with

respect to the celebration of holidays. Other congregants objected to “sharing” Passover with Christians. I understood the feelings of these congregants and made an attempt in my sermons leading up to the event to discuss the underlying issues related to religious and cultural sharing.

While I do not support appropriation of one religion’s symbols by another religion, I was inspired to undertake this project by something said by my Master’s Thesis mentor at New York University, Rabbi Dr. Baruch Levine. In explaining why he had made the study of the Book of Leviticus a focus of his scholarly work, he explained, “I don’t approve of the building of the Third Temple and the reinstitution of the sacrificial system, but if they build it in my lifetime, I want to be able to tell them how to do it properly.”²⁵³ That’s how I ultimately came to feel about Christian Seders. Since more and more churches seemed to be doing them, I wanted to help them do a better job in focusing on Christian spirituality rather than pretending that a badly edited (or unedited) version of the traditional Haggadah was representative of the Last Supper.

After reprising the Last Supper Celebration in 1998, Pastor Wilson and I planned to edit and expand the Haggadah and have it published. However our individual work commitments made it difficult for us to focus on this project and ultimately the book did not get done. One aspect of the work we had done together that I felt needed work was the historical and scholarly background of the Seder. What were Jews doing for Passover in the early first century? What was Jesus really doing at the Last Supper? Was it a Seder or something different? How was the Last Supper understood by the writers of the New Testament and the Church Fathers? I also wanted to commit to paper the explanations of

²⁵³ Classroom discussion about the Book of Leviticus, New York University, 1988.

the Jewish meanings of the rituals that had been retained in the *Last Supper Celebration Haggadah*.

When I entered the New York Theological Seminary Doctor of Ministry Program in 2008, I decided that a re-exploration of the Last Supper Celebration would make a worthwhile project. I formed a site team that included several Protestant ministers and another rabbi. The ministers provided important guidance on Christian spiritual matters, ritual and God language and assisted me in navigating the nuances of the New Testament. My rabbinic colleague helped to keep me grounded in Judaism as I navigated my way through the world of the Last Supper. In order to understand my approach to revisiting the Last Supper Celebration liturgy, it is necessary to look at Haggadot written for Christians.

An Introduction to “Non-Jewish” Haggadot and Seders

A Seder requires a Haggadah, both as a guide for the leader, and as a tool to facilitate participation of the attendees. Participation in the Seder by everyone gathered around the table is endemic to the Seder itself. Every person must eat the ritual foods and drink the wine or the grape juice. The youngest person must chant the Four Questions. Every person must say the appropriate prayers. The Afikomen must be hidden and redeemed. The door must be opened for Elijah.

Many of the rituals were instituted to “keep the children involved.” (See Chapter 3.) These continue to be added to today in the form of Passover Seder toys like the “Bag of Plagues,” small rubber frogs, finger puppets portraying the main characters of the

Exodus story, “walking” matzah balls, plague masks and board games.²⁵⁴ In addition, there are Haggadot that are written specifically for families with young children. New songs have been added that appeal to young children like the “Frog Song”²⁵⁵ (if one’s child went to Jewish pre-k or kindergarten one dare not omit this song from the Seder) and the “Plagues” song set to the tune of “She’ll be Coming Round the Mountain.”²⁵⁶

Jesus didn’t need a Haggadah because the Passover Seder of his time was a very simple affair. However, by the time that the Geonim began to keep notes on the order of the Seder (7th century C.E.) the customs and liturgy had evolved to the point where a written order of the Seder was necessary.

There are basically three types of Haggadot written for Christians. The first group, typified by *The Passover Celebration: A Haggadah for the Seder*, jointly created by the Archdiocese of Chicago and the Anti-Defamation League²⁵⁷ contains a simplified Passover ritual and English translation of the traditional Seder and Haggadah. Often, in this type of Haggadah, the text is written by someone Jewish or is a collaboration between someone Jewish and someone Christian. Haggadot written to educate Christians usually contain some explanation and commentary about Passover, the Seder and its rituals. Hebrew words and phrases rarely appear in the text. The purpose of this type of Haggadah is to permit non-Jews to learn about and possibly experience a normative

²⁵⁴ Jewish toys for Passover. <http://www.traditionsjewishgifts.com/childrenpassover.html>. Accessed Jan 8, 2014.

²⁵⁵ The Frog Song and other songs for children. http://admin.emanuelnyc.org/media/documents/doc_684.pdf. Accessed Jan 8, 2014.

²⁵⁶ Marry Ann Barrows Wark, *We Tell It To Our Children. A Haggadah for Seders with Young Children*. St. Paul; Mensch Maker’s Press, 1988, p. 51.

²⁵⁷ Rabbi Leon Klenicki, and Myra Cohen. *The Passover Celebration: A Haggadah for the Seder*. Chicago; Archdiocese of Chicago: Liturgy Training Publications, 2001.

Passover Seder, often without a Jewish leader. It is essentially a “do it yourself” guide to the Passover Seder for Christians.

The second group of Haggadot written for Christians are written by Christians. These Haggadot model traditional Jewish Haggadot and often include Hebrew words, liturgy, traditional Hebrew prayers and Hebrew songs from the Jewish Haggadah. The difference between these Haggadot and “Jewish” Haggadot is that they may include Christological commentary. Some of these Haggadot also add “Christian” versions of a Jewish Passover ritual. For example, in *Celebrating an Authentic Passover Seder: A Haggadah for Home and Church* by Joseph M. Stallings, the author adds “The Hillel Sandwich: A Christian Adaptation.” This is placed after the traditional Hillel sandwich ritual. The text deals with the substitution of Jesus for the Pascal sacrifice.²⁵⁸ The Haggadot in group two are generally respectful of the Jewish traditions of the Seder and are careful to label Christian additions or interpretations as such. When Christian readings or rituals are added, it is with a clear purpose that is obvious to the reader or participant in the Seder.

Haggadot for Jews and Christians are easily available on line. This was not true in 1997 when Pastor Wilson and I collaborated. There was actually very little Jewish content on the fledgling internet in 1997.

An online Christian “group two” Haggadah that is particularly well done is the Christian Haggadah adapted by Dennis Bratcher and available on the Christian Resource Institute website.²⁵⁹ This Haggadah is primarily true to the traditional Jewish text until the

²⁵⁸ Joseph M. Stallings, *Celebrating an Authentic Passover Seder: A Haggadah for Home and Church*. San Jose: Resource Publications, Inc. 1994, pp. 102-103.

²⁵⁹ Christian Haggadah. <http://www.cresourcei.org/haggadah.html>. Accessed Jan 8, 2014.

Third Cup of Wine. At this point, the Eucharist is introduced along with other Christian content. However, the text is very clear that this is content for Christians. There is no hidden conversionary message or agenda in this Haggadah.²⁶⁰

The third group of Haggadot are those which seek to syncretize Jewish traditions with Christian messages and rituals. There are different, but generally unstated agendas in these Haggadot. Some are clearly aimed at a Jewish audience and have a conversionary intent. In Haggadot such as these, references to Jesus are slipped into the text.

An interesting example of this type of Haggadah is the *Celebrate Passover Haggadah: A Christian Presentation of the Traditional Jewish Festival*. It is written by a woman who was raised in a Jewish home but became “a Jewish believer in *Y’shua* (Jesus.)”²⁶¹ The foreword is written by Moishe Rosen, founder of Jews for Jesus. In this Haggadah, references to the Messiah and *Y’shua* as well as uncited New Testament references are very numerous. For example, in material following the recitation of the traditional Four Questions, in response to the question and answer about why matzah is eaten on Passover, we read, “Similarly we eagerly wait for Messiah’s swift return ‘as a thief in the night.’”²⁶² And we seek to live holy lives so as ‘not to shrink away from him in shame at his coming.’”²⁶³

Other Haggadot in group three are more straightforward in their syncretistic agenda. These Haggadot generally have the term “Messianic” in their titles. They take the format and liturgy of the traditional Seder and Haggadah, including Hebrew terms, and

²⁶⁰ Ibid.

²⁶¹ Joan R. Lipis, *Celebrate Passover Haggadah: A Christian Presentation of the Traditional Jewish Festival*. San Francisco: Purple Pomegranate Productions, 2000, back cover copy.

²⁶² See 1 Thessalonians 5:2.

²⁶³ See 1 John 2:28; see also Lipis. *Celebrate Passover Haggadah*, p. 21.

insert additional readings from the New Testament and Christian writings. In *The Messianic Passover Haggadah* for example, the first cup of wine begins with the short kiddush (*borey pri hagafen*, not the traditional Passover festival kiddush) and then continues with a Christological reading and a New Testament text.

Leader: As he began his final Passover seder, Yeshua the Messiah shared a cup with his *talmidim* (disciples) and said to them, “Take this and share it among yourselves. For I tell you that from now on I will not drink the fruit of the vine until the Kingdom of God comes” (Luke 22:17-18).²⁶⁴

One might ask, “What’s so wrong with any of this?” It’s certainly a reasonable question.

Whether or not the Last Supper was a Passover Seder or a Jewish Ritual Meal as some scholars argue based on the Gospel of John rather than the Synoptic Gospels,²⁶⁵ the importance of Jesus’ last gathering with his disciples is as important an event for Christians as the Covenant at Sinai is for Jews.

There is no problem with the group one Haggadot. These are clearly written for educational purposes. For churches or Christians with limited or no access to a helpful rabbi, cantor, Jewish educator or a welcoming Jewish community, a Seder conducted with these Haggadot may be the only way for Christians to experience a traditional Passover Seder. One would hope that the leader would not encourage the participants to believe that they are experiencing Passover in the way that Jesus did since this is not historically accurate.

The second group of Haggadot pose a greater problem for the Jewish community. When the line between what is authentically Jewish and what is authentically Christian is

²⁶⁴ Barry and Steffi Rubin, *The Messianic Passover Haggadah*. Clarksville, MD; Messianic Jewish Publishers, 2005, p. 7.

²⁶⁵ A very thorough discussion of this issue is presented by Joachim Jeremias in *The Eucharistic Words of Jesus*. New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1966.

blurred, neither Christians nor Jews are well served. The second group of Haggadot are often found in homes where there is a Jewish/Christian intermarriage. In many of these situations, the spouses have never sufficiently worked through how to appropriately participate in and share one another's religious rituals. When children come along, the issues become even more difficult. A Passover Haggadah that seems to make it possible for both Jews and Christians to be "recognized" in the Seder is very appealing to these families. The "group two" Haggadot also seem to be tailor-made for churches that have a high percentage of Jewish/Christian families. Since the Christian comments and additions are usually very clearly identified, a church may feel that it can host a Passover Seder using this type of Haggadah without promoting an evangelizing agenda.

The group three Haggadot, however, pose serious problems for the Jewish community. While open season on evangelizing Jews has been curtailed by some Christian denominations in recent years, there are still many groups for whom missionizing Jews is a vital part of their faith and practice. CJF Ministries, for example, is an organization that is particularly straightforward about their intent. On their website they state that they are "an international organization dedicated to sharing the message of Yeshua (Jesus) "to the Jew first and also to the Greek" (Rom. 1:16), as well as equipping and educating the body of Messiah. Our first goal is to reach Jewish people with the Gospel of *Yeshua HaMashiach*, Jesus the Messiah."²⁶⁶ They provide Seder leaders to churches that wish to conduct Messianic Seders.²⁶⁷

The syncretization of Jewish and Christian ideas in the group three Haggadot clearly announces the sponsoring group's missionary agenda towards Jews. It may also

²⁶⁶ CJF Ministries. <http://www.cjfm.org/about-us/who-we-are.html>. Accessed Jan 8, 2014.

²⁶⁷ CJF Ministries. <http://passover.cjfm.org/passover-schedule>. Accessed Jan 8, 2014.

serve to meet the needs of Christians who believe that Judaism is the “root” of Christianity and that therefore performing Jewish rituals is part of appropriate Christian ritual behavior. These Christians either do not understand or may wish to purposely ignore the fact that a Messianic Seder is not a Jewish ritual.

The Beginnings of A Last Supper Seder

When I originally wrote the material for *A Last Supper Celebration*,²⁶⁸ the precursor of my doctoral project, *A Last Supper Seder*, I was concerned about maintaining the traditional structure of a Jewish Passover Seder. We included the Four Cups and other traditional elements that Pastor Wilson and I felt were part of an “authentic” Passover experience. However, we eliminated the second hand washing since this ritual has no meaning for someone who is not Jewish. Instead, we put greater emphasis on hand washing before dipping the parsley in salt water. This ritual was explained in the context of the Christian tradition of lavabo which takes place in some Christian communities before Communion. A parallel was also drawn between Jesus’ washing the feet of his disciples and the Christian concept of “servanthood.” Rather than washing their own hands, participants washed the hands of the person sitting next to him/her. This ritual was followed by a hymn from Ghana, *Jesu Jesu*.

Another Jewish tradition that was re-interpreted was the breaking of Matzah. In all Christian and Messianic Haggadot, the breaking of the Matzah is related to Jesus in some way. In *Behold! The Lamb of God*, a Haggadah that bridges the “group two and group three Haggadot,” the author likens the matzah to Jesus who is the “Bread of Life.”

²⁶⁸ The text of this can be found in the Appendix.

(John 6:36).²⁶⁹ In *A Guide to A Christian Seder*, a group two Haggadah, the broken matzah (the middle matzah) is compared to “our Lord, (who) was broken for us.”²⁷⁰ In *The Messianic Passover Haggadah*, a Haggadah that belongs to “group three,” the three matzot are compared to the trinity – Father, Son and Spirit. The “stripes” on the matzah are compared to lashes on Jesus’ body when he was crucified and the “piercing” of the matzah is compared to the piercing of Jesus body. The term Afikomen is incorrectly translated as “the coming one” and the wrapping of the Afikomen in a cloth is compared to the wrapping of Jesus’ body after his death.²⁷¹ (Some of this material, although in less detail, is contained in *A Guide to a Christian Seder*.)²⁷²

In the *Last Supper Celebration Haggadah*, the emphasis was on Jesus and the parable of the Lost Sheep. The broken and hidden matzah had a social justice orientation related to caring for those who in the community who are alienated and lost. The scriptural text related to the ritual of breaking the middle matzah was Luke 15:7 which, in the *Last Supper Celebration Haggadah* text notes that this text “reflected rabbinical tradition.” “There will be more rejoicing in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous people who have no need to repent.”²⁷³

In a traditional Haggadah there is no ritual that marks the return of the Afikomen other than the reward of those who find it. However, in *A Last Supper Celebration*, because the afikomen was cast into a symbol for those in the community who were lost, a new ritual was created. The young people who brought back the Afikomen said, “We

²⁶⁹ John Dan, *Behold! The Lamb of God: An Easter Passover Seder Service for Christians*. The Lakes, NV; Eden Publishing, 1995, p. 6.

²⁷⁰ Michael Roepke, *A Guide to a Christian Seder*. Airleaf publishing, airleaf.com, 2006, p 97.

²⁷¹ Rubin. *The Messianic Passover Haggadah*. p. 13.

²⁷² Roepke. *Guide to A Christian Seder*, p. 97.

²⁷³ Rabbi Jo David and Pastor Kimberly. A Wilson, *A Last Supper Celebration*. Unpublished manuscript, 1998, p. 4 – included in Appendix.

searched for that which was lost and we have found it.” Everyone then responded, “We rejoice when the lost in our communities are found by God’s love. This was followed by the singing of the hymn *I, the Lord of Sea and Sky*.²⁷⁴

The ritual of opening the door for Elijah and the filling of Elijah’s cup was also transformed. Participants of the Seder were asked to bring canned goods as donations for a local interfaith food network. When it was time to open the door for Elijah, everyone who had brought food placed it on a communal table near the door. A cup for Elijah was filled. It was explained that this was a cup for all those who were not at the communal table. Pastor Wilson read, “Jesus taught: ‘Love your neighbor as you love yourself.’” I explained that even as we care for our neighbors, we also need to tell God what we need ourselves. There was a large empty cup on the table. Participants passed the empty cup around the table. While holding it, each person whispered a prayer to God for his/her own needs. This was followed by the traditional Christian “Sharing of the Peace” and the singing of *Sim Shalom, Dona Nobis*.²⁷⁵

The social justice theme in the *Last Supper Celebration Haggadah* was a result of the strong thread of interfaith justice work that was being done in the late 1990’s. In addition, the actions of turning attention to the “broken” people in the community and providing food for those in need was a substitute for a focus on the coming of the Messiah. Rather than discussing issues around the coming – or the Second Coming – participants undertook Messianic actions. Acting to bring back the “lost” members of the community and bringing food for the hungry spoke to the hope for a time when the world will be whole and at peace.

²⁷⁴ Ibid., p 11.

²⁷⁵ Ibid., p 12.

A Last Supper Celebration concluded with the *Birkat Kohanim* (Priestly Blessing)²⁷⁶ in English and Hebrew and the singing of Debbie Friedman's *Tefilat Haderech* (Traveler's Prayer), a song based on the traditional Jewish traveler's prayer. While neither of these is part of the traditional Seder, these were liturgies that were meaningful and accessible to both Christians and Jews.

My experience with Pastor Wilson was a very positive one. The program that we presented was so well accepted that we offered it a second year even though I was no longer the rabbi of the local synagogue in Freeport. Much of our commentary on the rituals was extemporaneous, which I always felt was somewhat problematic, but as two busy clergy people, we didn't have the time to do more than create a document that would lead the participants through the ritual.

A Last Supper Celebration was a hybrid of a Jewish ritual and a Christian Midrash on the meaning of Passover to Christians. In working through the liturgy, Pastor Wilson and I spoke frankly with one another about the theological boundaries that were important to us. I wanted to make sure that the participants understood that we were not recreating the Last Supper. It was also important to me to pull out of the liturgy those elements that did not make sense for Christians. For example, the prayers were all rewritten and rendered in English because, in my opinion, Hebrew is not an appropriate prayer language for American Christians and because the formula of Jewish prayer is specific to Jewish tradition and culture.

Pastor Wilson wished to integrate Christian hymns that had appropriate connections to the Haggadah liturgy. In addition, she was concerned that the prayers

²⁷⁶ See Numbers 6:24-26.

present a Christian theology but was willing to omit references to the Trinity and language like, “in Your name we pray” which was uncomfortable for me. The Seder had a strong social action orientation that Pastor Wilson and I both felt was an appropriate representation of shared Jewish and Christian world values.

The Four Cups of Wine (in this case grape juice because of the church’s concerns about fostering alcoholism, a hot button topic for clergy of many faiths in the 1990’s) were a major focal point of the Seder that underscored the social justice theme of the Haggadah. Each cup had a theme and was dedicated to a person or an idea that helped to expand the understanding of Christian life and mission.

The First Cup – The Cup of Holiness - was dedicated to a Christian who was a Holocaust hero.²⁷⁷ The Second Cup – The Cup of Intentional Living – focused on Jesus’ teaching that everything we have is God’s gift.²⁷⁸ The Third Cup – the Cup of Blessing – focused on transcendence over physical and mental challenges.²⁷⁹ The Fourth Cup – The Cup of Redemption – was dedicated to Civil Rights heroine Rosa Parks.²⁸⁰

A Last Supper Celebration was unique because it was a comprehensive rethinking of how to present an authentic Passover Seder experience while appropriately accommodating Christian theological themes and spiritual needs related to Holy Week. While most of the participants were members of Pastor Wilson’s church, Jews from my congregation also joined in the program. Some came they were supporters of my work, some because they part of intermarried families, and some just because they were curious. Most of the members of Pastor Wilson’s church participated because they

²⁷⁷ *Last Supper Celebration*, p. 2.

²⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 8.

²⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, p 12.

²⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, p 13.

wanted to experience a Passover Seder, even though we were very clear that this was not a traditional Jewish Seder.

By the 1990's, Interfaith Seders, Peace Seders and Feminist Seders, all of which had a "universal" orientation, had become extremely popular. For "community" (read "interfaith") Seders, "objectionable" parts of the Haggadah – like the text associated with opening the door for Elijah – were excised. Songs were added or substituted to make Christians, and particularly African Americans, more comfortable. The American spiritual *Go Down Moses* was often added to the section of the Seder dealing with the story of the exodus from Egypt because it was familiar to most people.

In some ways, the universalization of the Passover Seder made it an "American" rather than "Jewish" commodity. In 1998, Dreamworks Studios released the animated film, *The Prince of Egypt* complete with soundtrack. This was a big budget animated film about the Exodus. In 1999, a Haggadah with a traditional text was published featuring illustrations from the film.²⁸¹ Because of the commercialization of Passover, the Seder became much more accessible to non-Jews at the end of the 20th century. Perhaps because of this ease of access and the marketing of Passover as a "universal" experience, some churches began to look more closely at the connection between the Passover Seder and the Last Supper.

This trend has continued to grow although hard statistics do not seem to be available. However, a quick Google search uncovered six Passover Seders presented in 2013 in churches in New York City, Las Vegas, Ringgold, Georgia and Spartanburg,

²⁸¹ Rabbi Reuven Frank, *The Prince of Egypt: Family Passover Haggadah*. New York; Circa Press, Inc., 1999.

South Carolina.²⁸² CJR Ministries offers Seder Leaders to churches that want to offer a Messianic Seder. According to their website, last year their leaders led 19 Seders in 7 states and Canada.²⁸³ Chicago-area teacher Justin Kron has packaged himself as a Christian guide to the Jewish roots of Christianity and offers a Passover Seder program, *The Passover Experience*, so that participants can gain “a greater understanding of the Jewish roots of their faith and have the opportunity to engage with God's ultimate story of redemption that was provided through "the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world" (John 1:29).”²⁸⁴

9/11 dramatically changed attitudes about interfaith interaction. It quickly became clear that if there was going to be healing in America, it would be necessary to bring Muslims into the insular world of Judeo/Christian interfaith interactions. The need to include Muslims in a meaningful way disrupted the safe and traditional Jewish/Christian paradigm that was at the heart of American “Judeo Christian” interactions. In the early years of the 21st Century, it was difficult to incorporate Muslims into interfaith forums because of hostility and suspicion on all sides. However, over time, significant relationships began to be developed between Jewish, Christian and Muslim clergy.

This has been somewhat problematic for female Jewish clergy (I can’t speak for female Christian clergy) because many Imams will not engage in programs that involve

²⁸² Prince of Egypt Haggadah. <http://www.ucg.org/holidays-and-holy-days/gods-holy-days/passover/>; <http://www.bethechurchgrace.org/pages.asp?pageid=118545>; http://bethshiloh.org/spartaburg_seder.aspx; <http://www.manhattanchurch.org/passover.asp>; <http://www.ccny.org/article358919.htm>. Accessed Jan. 9, 2014.

²⁸³ CJR Ministries. http://passover.cjfm.org/passover-schedule_ Accessed Jan. 9, 2014.

²⁸⁴ Justin Kron Passover Ministry. http://justinkron.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=20&Itemid=34. Accessed Jan. 9, 2014.

female clergy. Additionally, many Orthodox rabbis will not participate in a program where a female rabbi is present.

Today, besides local clergy relationships there are a great number of interfaith organizations, initiatives and foundations. These generally focus on broad interfaith education, communication between groups and joint action around social action and humanitarian projects and issues. Among the most “high profile” organizations are the Pluralism Project at Harvard, the Interfaith Youth Core in Chicago and the Groundswell Movement.²⁸⁵ Interestingly, Groundswell uses the term “Multifaith” rather than “interfaith” to describe its mission.²⁸⁶ Harvard’s Pluralism Project talks about “diversity” in its mission statement.²⁸⁷ The Peace Islands Institute, a Multifaith global peace-making organization with Muslim Turkish roots manages to avoid terms like “interfaith” and “Multifaith,” preferring terms like “mutual respect” and “collaboration.”²⁸⁸

The way in which religions interact in America is still very much in flux. How this will affect religious “borrowing” remains to be seen. There are certain to be missteps along the road as we get to know one another. An example of how it is possible to stumble while cooperating was a multifaith commemoration of Hiroshima Day in which I participated in 2011. This program was held near the United Nations and was organized by a Japanese Buddhist Priest who is a friend of mine. There were ten or more different religious groups participating. Each representative offered a prayer for peace or healing from his or her religious background. We then sang a “song of peace.”

²⁸⁵Interfaith Dialogue. <http://berkeleycenter.georgetown.edu/posts/the-challenges-of-interfaith-dialogue>. Accessed Jan. 9, 2014.

²⁸⁶Groundswell Movement. <http://www.groundswell-movement.org>. Accessed Jan. 9, 2014.

²⁸⁷Pluralism Project. <http://pluralism.org/about/mission>. Accessed Jan. 9, 2014.

²⁸⁸Peace Islands Institute. <http://www.peaceislands.org/about-pii/mission-and-vision> Accessed Jan. 9, 2014.

The song that the organizer had chosen was John Lennon's "Imagine," a song I thought I knew well and which seemed to be an excellent choice. It wasn't until I found myself singing the lyric, "Imagine there's no countries, It isn't hard to do, Nothing to kill or die for, and no religion, too" that I realized that we still have a long way to go in our Multifaith work. While this is a sentiment that is not a problem for a Buddhist, for Jews, Christians and Muslims having "no religion" is problematic in the extreme. The fact that the participants in this program knew and respected the organizer made it possible for us to laugh this off and discuss what song might be more appropriate for the following year. Fifteen years ago, when Multifaith cooperation was in its infancy, this comfortable outcome might not have been possible.

Where we have been and where we are now with respect to Multifaith engagement is essential to understanding why I felt that "A Last Supper Seder" was important work for a rabbi in the early 21st Century. In the next chapter, we will look at my thesis project and examine its creation and presentation.

Chapter 5 A Last Supper Seder

Introduction

A Last Supper Seder was presented at Park Avenue Christian Church on Maundy Thursday, April 1, 2010 at Park Avenue Christian Church in New York City. The church describes itself as affiliated with the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) and the United Church of Christ. The demonstration project was the culmination of a year's work with a group of Christian ministers, a rabbi and a Christian lay leader. During the year, I facilitated a "test run" of the project at Woodbury Union Church, Presbyterian in Warwick, New York and fine-tuned the Haggadah in a liturgy overview workshop with students, faculty and administrators at New York Theological Seminary.

A Last Supper Seder was inspired by *A Last Supper Celebration*, a program designed to give Christians a meaningful spiritual experience related to the Passover Seder. This program was created in 1997 in collaboration with Pastor Kimberly Wilson of Bethlehem Lutheran Church in Baldwin, New York while I was the rabbi of Union Reform Temple in Freeport, New York. The program was presented at the church in coordination with Holy Week in 1997 and 1998.

The twelve years between the presentations of *A Last Supper Celebration* (1998) and *A Last Supper Seder* (2010) were filled with a number of events that significantly changed the world in which we live. A new millennium began. The World Trade Center was destroyed. America became involved in wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. The entire world suffered severe economic setbacks and America found itself in a major recession.

All of these events had an impact on how individuals and communities relate to one another.

I changed too. After leaving Union Reform Temple in Freeport, New York in June of 1997, I developed a not-for-profit foundation, the Jewish Appleseed Foundation, whose mission was to mentor and support small Jewish communities around the world. Much of the Foundation's efforts between 1997 and 2007 were focused on helping to rebuild the Progressive Movement in Germany.

In 2002, I was diagnosed with 9/11 related Post Traumatic Stress Disorder. My recovery included a re-examination of my life goals. This undertaking resulted in my addressing a number of pre-9/11 projects that I had "back shelved. I traveled to many parts of the world as an "on board" rabbi for several cruise lines. I began the Doctor of Ministry in Multifaith Ministry program at New York Theological Seminary (NYTS).

Through relationships formed at NYTS, I found myself in Ghana at the end of 2009 as part of a Multifaith mission, a life changing experience. In 2011, I began working as an adjunct professor at Berkeley College in New York City. Berkeley is a private college that focuses on first generation college students, foreign students and veterans. In 2012, I returned to Africa, this time to Pietermaritzburg, South Africa where I was a presenter at an international conference on the study of Jews in Africa. Given all these experiences, it's understandable that my "take" on *A Last Supper Celebration* would have altered.

There are several differences between *A Last Supper Celebration* and *A Last Supper Seder*.

Tone

A Last Supper Celebration was designed to educate and entertain. The Haggadah has a variety of illustrations designed to break up the text and hold the reader's attention. While the Haggadah references a number of New Testament texts and teachings, there are almost no citations or footnotes. *A Last Supper Seder* has no illustrations. However, all of the scriptural material is cited. In addition, all the explanations about the Jewish background of the Last Supper are contained in the *Last Supper Seder* Haggadah. In general, it is more reflective and scholarly than *A Last Supper Celebration*.

Length

There seems to be a real difference between Christians and Jews about what constitutes a worship service or an educational experience that is “too long.” Many churches keep their normal worship services to an hour or less. Educational programming often runs no more than sixty to ninety minutes.²⁸⁹ In the Jewish world, on the other hand, a Shabbat morning service can last three hours or more. A “serious” Jewish Seder can last four hours or more, including about 45 minutes for dinner.

A Last Supper Celebration was designed to last about 45 minutes for the first part of the Seder and about 30 minutes for the second part of the Seder. *A Last Supper Seder* is longer. The part before dinner runs about 75 minutes. The second part of the Seder runs about 30 minutes. This longer time frame facilitates a deeper look at the Seder and the Last Supper. The longer running time was developed during discussions with my Site Team and with Pastors Jackson and Kinnamon.

²⁸⁹ This is based on my own experience as a rabbi and a worshipping Jew and on discussions with a number of Christian ministers with whom I've collaborated over the years.

Balance

In *A Last Supper Celebration*, there was an effort to equally balance the Christian and Jewish content. This reflects what was perhaps an unconscious concern on my part about what was Jewishly appropriate to share and what was perhaps not comfortable for me. I think that Pastor Wilson and I were both working with an interfaith concept in the back of our minds despite the fact that the program was intended for Christians. In *A Last Supper Seder*, the text is clearly intended for a Christian audience and the liturgy contains more Christian than Jewish content.

Scriptural Content

A Jewish Haggadah contains a great deal of scriptural content. In *A Last Supper Seder*, a conscious effort was made to incorporate the words of the New Testament to tell the story of the Last Supper. In addition, wherever possible, New Testament texts were used to inform the liturgy. In some instances, parallel verses from the Tanach and the New Testament were used to illustrate the intimate relationship between Judaism and Christianity. An instance of this is in the closing section of the Haggadah in which a quotation from Romans references both Isaiah and Joel.²⁹⁰

Music

In *A Last Supper Celebration*, a guitar-playing song leader led the singing. While most of the songs were hymns from the Lutheran Hymnal, a few additional songs were added. These were *Go Down Moses*, *Sim Shalom*, *Dona Nobis*, and the Debbie Friedman *Tefilat Haderech*, which has an English text. There was no inclusion of any of the traditional Jewish Seder songs.

²⁹⁰ See Romans 10:11 quoting Isaiah 28:16; Romans 10:13 quoting Joel 2:32. See also *A Last Supper Seder Haggadah*, p 24.

In *A Last Supper Seder*, the musical selections varied depending on the venue in which the Seder was presented. Two experts were consulted on the choice of music for the Demonstration Project at Park Avenue Christian Church: Frankco Harris, a talented interfaith song leader, and Paul Vasile, Minister of Music at Park Avenue Christian Church. For the most part, standard Christian hymns were chosen. However, *Go Down Moses (Let My People Go)* and Min Hametzar from Psalm 118 were also included. Min Hametzar is sung during Hallel in the Passover Seder. Again, no traditional Seder songs were included. In a follow up conversation after the Park Avenue Christian Church event, the Minister, Dr. Alvin Jackson suggested that other songs in Hebrew might be added to the Haggadah. He told me that his congregants like to sing songs in Hebrew.

Leadership of the Seder

A Last Supper Celebration was led by Pastor Wilson and me assisted by a song leader with a guitar. Although there were approximately 60 participants, the event had a relaxed feeling to it. Pastor Wilson and I divided the liturgy between us. Participants also did readings.

A Last Supper Seder, held at Park Avenue Christian Church, was led by the Senior Pastor, the Associate Pastor, the Minister of Music who played a grand piano and by me. Attendees also did readings. A majority of the “leader” readings were presented by the two pastors. This created a more “Christian” dynamic to the event. The use of the piano gave the singing a more formal quality. For the Seder at Woodbury Union Church in Warwick, Rhode Island, the church’s choir sang a number of selections. Because the choir chose songs that were very upbeat, it was fun to listen to them and to participate.

An In Depth Look at *A Last Supper Seder*

The Introduction Handout

It was clear to me that the participants of *A Last Supper Seder* would have many questions about the ritual and why we just weren't presenting a traditional Passover Seder. I created an Introductory Handout for participants. It was a four page overview that discussed the festival of Passover and the connection between Passover, Jesus and the Last Supper. The Handout also offered some basic details about the new ritual the participants would be experiencing.²⁹¹

The Demonstration Project: A Last Supper Seder

Facility, Set Up and Leadership

The Demonstration Project Seder took place in the social hall at Park Avenue Christian Church. The room was set up with round tables. There was a "head table" for the leaders. At the other end of the room, several tables were set up for the buffet dinner that would be served during the break. The food was catered by a local kosher caterer and was kosher for Passover. Paper and plastic utensils were used.

The tables were set so that each person had a small plate that contained charoset, horseradish and parsley and cups for grape juice and for water. There was a bottle of kosher grape juice and a pitcher of water was on every table, a plate of matzah covered by a napkin, a complete Seder Plate and a large empty wine glass. There were also three candles and a pack of matches on each table.

At the head table, there was a kiddish cup, a second empty wine glass, a Seder Plate, a plate of matzah and a special bag for the three ceremonial matzot filled with three

²⁹¹ *A Last Supper Seder: A Liturgical Haggadah for Christian Churches. Introductory Handout.* A copy of the handout is contained in the Appendix.

pieces of *Shmurah* matzah.²⁹² There was an extra napkin in which to wrap the Afikomen. Three candles and a pack of matches were also on the table. There was at least one piece of *Shmurah* matzah at each table. This was a last minute addition and is not indicated in the Haggadah. When the matzah was uncovered, I explained the difference between machine made “traditional” kosher for Passover matzah and *Shmurah* matzah. If I were to publish this liturgy, I would add this as an option.

The Seder was led by Park Avenue Christian Church’s Senior Pastor, Reverend Dr. Alvin Jackson, their Associate Pastor, Reverend Katherine Kinnamon, and by me with music facilitated by the Minister of Music, Paul Vasile. There were approximately 60 participants, most of whom were members of the church.

The First Part of the Seder²⁹³

The Seder began with a welcome by Pastor Jackson, who introduced Pastor Kinnamon, Paul Vasile and me. The first readings in the Haggadah deal with the background of Passover and Jesus’ relationship to the Seder and the Last Supper. The text from Matthew 26²⁹⁴ describing the preparations of the disciples for the Seder was

²⁹² *Shmurah* matzah is special matzah for Passover. The term “*shmurah*” means “that which is guarded.” The grain is watched as soon as it is harvested so that it does not come in contact with moisture of any kind. This would make it unfit to be used to make matzah for Passover. *Shmurah* matzah can be machine made, but the most popular type is round and hand made. It is also extremely expensive. Commercially produced regular “Kosher for Passover” matzah runs between \$1 - \$3 a pound (box) depending on where and when it is purchased. *Shmurah* matzah, produced either locally or in Israel, runs between \$16 - \$35 per pound (box) again, depending on where and when it is purchased. Some very traditional families will only use *shmurah* matzah for the Seders on the first two nights of Passover. The amount of matzah one must eat at the Seder varies according to whether one is Ashkenazic or Sephardic and also which rulings one follows. For practical purposes, 2 1/2 – 3 matzot (total) for the three times one is obligated to eat matzah - motzi matzah, korech and Afikomen – is about right. See the discussion about this at the following url:

http://halachipedia.com/index.php?title=Required_Amount_of_Matzah_and_Wine_for_the_Seder. Accessed Jan 9, 2014.

²⁹³ The entire text of *A Last Supper Seder Haggadah* can be found in the Appendix.

²⁹⁴ See Matthew 26:17-19.

read. Pastor Jackson explained the Greco/Roman background of the Passover Seder. The five basic themes of a Jewish Seder were presented:

1. An acknowledgment of God's redemptive power;
2. The right to freedom for all people;
3. The importance of acting on behalf of those in need;
4. The imperative for all people to work to bring healing to the world;
5. The belief in a time when the world will be at peace.

Pastor Kinnamon set the groundwork for the understanding of the shared scriptural heritage between Christians and Jews.

Candle Lighting

At the beginning of every Sabbath and every festival a minimum of two candles are lit 18 minutes before sundown.²⁹⁵ (The Jewish "day" begins in the evening because of the verse in Genesis that reads: "And there was evening and there was morning—the first day." Genesis 1:5). The two candles that are lit represent the Hebrew words *zachor* (remember) and *shamor* (guard.) These words appear in the fourth of the Ten Commandments (according to the Jewish order of the commandments). This is the commandment relating to the Sabbath. In Exodus 20:8, the first presentation of the Ten Commandments, one reads, "*Zachor et Yom HaShabbat*" – Remember the Sabbath. In the restatement of the Ten Commandments in Deuteronomy 5:12, one reads, "*Shamor et Yom HaShabbat*" – Guard the Sabbath.²⁹⁶

Lighting candles for a festival is not necessarily a Christian custom although candles are used ritually in churches in a variety of ways. However, the association of fire

²⁹⁵ Klein. *Guide to Jewish Religious Practice*, p. 56.

²⁹⁶ Ibid.

and the Divine Presence is a shared idea in Judaism and Christianity. For this reason, candle lighting was incorporated into the *Last Supper Seder*.

To differentiate the candle lighting in *A Last Supper Seder* from the Passover candle lighting, three candles, rather than two, were lit. The Haggadah text explains that each of the candles represents a particular idea. One candle represents Judaism, the source of the new ritual. One candle represents Christianity. The third candle represents the new ritual itself.

Once the candles were lit, a prayer was offered by all the participants. The prayer in the Haggadah takes its inspiration from Proverbs 4:12: “As I go forward, step by step, the way will be opened up for me.” This proverb ties into the first of the five basic themes of a Seder: God’s redemptive power. After saying this prayer, Seder participants greeted one another.

The First Cup of Wine

In the *Last Supper Seder* Haggadah, an introduction to the First Cup of the fruit of the vine (grape juice was used) includes a presentation of the four verses upon which the four cups are based – Exodus 6:6-7. (This is sometimes inserted into Jewish Haggadot even though it is not traditional to do so. In Passover Haggadot that have commentaries, this material may appear in the commentary associated with the First Cup.²⁹⁷ Some Christian Haggadot also discuss these four verses in relation to the First Cup.²⁹⁸)

These are the four verses. The words indicated in bold are the verbs that are associated with each of the cups.

²⁹⁷ *On Wings of Freedom: The Hillel Haggadah for the Nights of Passover*. Rabbi Richard N. Levy, ed and trans. Hoboken; Ktav Publishing House, 1989, p. 12.

²⁹⁸ Stallings. *Celebrating an Authentic Passover Seder*, p. 62.

Cup 1 - “I will **free** you from the labors of the Egyptians (6:6)

Cup 2 – And **deliver** you from their bondage. (6:6)

Cup 3 - I will **redeem** you with an outstretched arm and through extraordinary measures. (6:6)

Cup 4 - I will **take** you to be My people, and I will be your God. (6:7)

As in *A Last Supper Celebration*, each cup in *A Last Supper Seder* represents a particular theme. The First Cup is *The Cup of Freedom and New Beginnings*. (In a Passover Seder, this is traditionally the *Cup of Sanctification*.)²⁹⁹ The freedom referenced in *A Last Supper Seder* is specifically the freedom of religion.

The First Cup is also linked to Luke 22:17: “When Jesus began his Last Supper, he offered a cup to his disciples and said to them, “Take this, all of you, and drink from it.” After the reading of this text, the participants read together: “We give thanks for the freedom to examine our religious traditions and for finding new ways to embrace our heritage and religious teachings.” During the Seder, this reading was followed by a blessing of appreciation for the fruit of the vine (traditional to Judaism,) for the gift of religious freedom and a request that participants might embrace this gift to bring healing to the world. A song, *This is Day of New Beginnings* concluded the ritual of the First Cup.

The traditional hand washing which would occur in a Passover Seder at this point was eliminated because ritual hand washing as understood in Judaism is not part of Christian ritual behavior. The Haggadah continues with “Karpas,” the ritual of the parsley and its symbolism.

Karpas

²⁹⁹ See Chapter 3 of this work.

The traditional explanation of the parsley and the salt water is followed by a re-imagining of the parsley as a symbol of the religious creative spirit and the salt water as the tears of people of all faiths for the religious wars that have been fought throughout history. In the Haggadah, a prayer of appreciation for foods that grow in the earth (traditional Jewish prayer) was combined with a plea for renewal. Seder participants dipped the parsley in the salt water and ate it.

Yachatz – the Breaking of the Middle Matzah

The next section of the Haggadah presents an explanation of the Jewish obligation to eat Matzah during Passover and includes information about “kosher for Passover” labeling and restricted foods. The ritual of the Afikomen is explained. At the Seder, Pastor Kinnamon discussed the parable of Jesus and the Lost Sheep with respect to the broken matzah and the quotation from Luke about repentance. (Luke 15:7). This section of the Seder was very similar to *A Last Supper Celebration*.

Maggid

The Four Questions

In this section of the Seder, The Four Questions are read and explained. Significant participation by the attendees begins here. The Haggadah explains why one reclines, making reference to Matthew’s description of the Last Supper (26:19-21).

“The disciples did as Jesus had directed them and prepared the Passover. When evening came, ***Jesus was reclining at the table with the Twelve, and while they were eating*** he said, ‘I tell you the truth, one of you will betray me.’”

After the recitation of the traditional four questions, Pastor Jackson led a responsive reading about four questions that might be asked about the *Last Supper Seder*. The questions deal with issues related to the introduction of a new ritual, taking personal

responsibility for spiritual seeking and the effort to study and understand the way in which Judaism and Christianity intersect around the event of the Last Supper.

The Narrative

The story of the Exodus from Egypt begins to be told at this point. There was participatory singing of *Let My People Go*. The ritual of removing a drop of grape juice for each of the plagues was explained. Each of the plagues was detailed. Then Pastor Kinnamon led a ritual of removing sweetness for plagues that afflict the modern world.

The waging of war;

Religious intolerance;

Cynicism and lack of hope;

Disregard for our own true needs and feelings;

Callous disregard for the feelings of others;

Inadequate support for our houses of worship and religious institutions;

Exploitation of those in our society who are weak or vulnerable;

Judging others according to age, gender, gender orientation, appearance, religion, race, or national origin;

Acceptance of violence and negative messages in the media;

Pollution of our planet.

These plagues are similar to the plagues detailed in *A Last Supper Celebration* with three notable changes: “the waging of war,” is at the top of the list and “acceptance of violence and negative messages in the media” and “pollution of our planet” were added. These are all issues that have come to be very meaningful post 9/11 but which

were not as clearly articulated or top of mind in the late 1990's when the original liturgy was written.

The telling of the story of the Exodus continues with the 10th plague. This material was read by participants. After reading about the sacred song and dance that Miriam led after the Israelites transversed the Reed Sea on dry land, a statement about the way in which contributions of women are often ignored in the retelling of history was presented. This was followed by a group reading giving thanks for the lives and undocumented contributions of women throughout history. This material provides a transition to Christian narrative material which begins with Mary, the mother of Jesus.

In the *Last Supper Celebration* Haggadah there was a vague reference to prophets, and then the story of Jesus' birth was introduced. This was never really satisfying to me. The link between Miriam and another important Jewish woman, Mary, seemed more authentic and in keeping with the traditional format of storytelling that is part of the Maggid section of the Passover Haggadah.

The details of Jesus' trip to Jerusalem in order to observe Passover and the events of the night of the Last Supper are now told through various New Testament accounts. This includes a discussion of the meaning of the term "Maundy" as in "Maundy Thursday" and its relationship to the concept of being commanded per John 13:32, "A new commandment I give to you..." and John 13:34, "Love one another. As I have loved you, so must you love one another."

A description of Jesus' midrash on the breaking of bread and drinking of wine is presented through Matthew's writings.

Jesus took bread and after blessing it, he broke it, (as we broke the matzah earlier) and gave it to the disciples. He said to them, "Take and eat; this is

my body.’ Then Jesus took the cup of wine and after giving thanks, he gave it to them saying, ‘Drink from it all of you; for this is my blood of the new covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.’ (Matthew 26:26-27).

This is followed by a description of the events that followed the Last Supper - Jesus’ betrayal, trial, crucifixion, death and resurrection. The song An Upper Room Did Our Lord Prepare brings this part of the story to a conclusion.

The Second Cup

The Second Cup is dedicated to the concept of redemption from bondage through intentional living. This theme is based on Exodus 6:6 – “I will deliver you from their bondage,” and I Thessalonians 5:19-22: “Do not put out the Spirit’s fire; do not treat prophecies with contempt. Test everything. Hold onto the good. Avoid every kind of evil.”

Part of the liturgy in this section reads,

The bondage from which God delivered the Israelites was the bondage of slavery. When one is a slave, one has no ability to direct even the simplest aspects of one’s daily life. For a slave, the attempt to live a self-determined life can easily result in death.

The way in which we forge our own chains and limit our freedoms through unwise choices and actions has become a popular discussion topic at family Seders and communal Seders over the last 25 years or so. This topic often informs rabbis’ sermons in the weeks leading up to Passover. This is a universal issue which affects people of all religious, ethnic and cultural backgrounds. The approach to the concept of intentional living that was presented in *A Last Supper Celebration* is very different from the way in which it appears in *A Last Supper Seder*. In *A Last Supper Celebration*, the concept of “intentional living” is presented as a way of appreciating each moment of life.

Individuals are encouraged to act as though one's life is a "thank you" to God for one's existence.³⁰⁰

In *A Last Supper Seder*, the concept of intentional living has a harder edge which appropriately reflects the reality of the world in which we live today. A frank discussion of the way in which specific destructive habits can enslave an individual is presented followed by the suggestion that lack of mindfulness can lead to habits of thinking and behaving that are harmful to ourselves and others. The text of the *Last Supper Seder* Haggadah urges participants to break out of ingrained habits and comfortable ways of acting and thinking in order to live a better, more productive life. These ideas are linked to the concept of making every moment of one's life be one of positive action to heal the world.³⁰¹

After the exploration of the ideas related to redemption from self-inflicted bondage and intentional living, the Seder continues with a communal prayer over the Second Cup. The Second Cup is drunk and the Seder continues.

Explaining the Foods on the Seder Plate

In a traditional Passover Seder, the only items about which questions are asked and answered are the Pesach (the bone/beet), Matzah and Maror.³⁰² In *A Last Supper Seder* Haggadah, a series of alternating readings examine each of the items on the Seder Plate. This is similar to the liturgy created for *A Last Supper Celebration*. The decision to discuss everything on the Seder Plate was made because it was assumed that most

³⁰⁰ *Last Supper Celebration*, p. 8.

³⁰¹ *Last Supper Seder*, p.15.

³⁰² *The Feat of Freedom*, pp. 66-67.

Christians would not understand the foods on the Seder Plate. Therefore it made sense to provide explanations.

Truth be told, many Jews don't understand the symbolism of all the foods on the Seder Plate. However, because the Seder Plate is ubiquitous in the Jewish World, there's an assumption that everyone understands the meaning of all the items. From time to time I have attended a Seder where the leader discussed all the items on the Seder plate, especially if there were young children present or if there were a number of participants who were not Jewish.

In the *Last Supper Seder* Haggadah every item has a traditional Jewish explanation and a new Christian interpretation. For the most part, these explanations were reimagined for *A Last Supper Seder*. A beet was added to the Seder plate in addition to the shank bone. The reason for the addition of the beet was to show sensitivity to vegetarians. It also is intended to demonstrate that all people are welcome at the table.

This section ends with a discussion of the meaning of the roasted egg. The reading for the roasted egg follows.

Rabbi David: What is the meaning of the Roasted Egg?

Reader: In the Jewish tradition, the roasted egg is a symbol of the special festival offering that was brought to the Temple in Jerusalem. It also symbolizes the eternal cycles of life, death and rebirth.

Reader: For Christians, the roasted egg is a reminder of the Easter egg, a symbol of new life and resurrection.”

Hand Washing Ritual

In *A Last Supper Celebration*, the hand washing ceremony was positioned near the beginning of the Seder where the traditional hand washing without a blessing would take place. When re-envisioning *A Last Supper Seder*, the decision was made to shift hand washing to the section of the Haggadah in which the second hand washing would traditionally take place. This decision was made because there is a *machloket* (disagreement) about the first hand washing and whether or not it requires a blessing.³⁰³

In a traditional Passover Seder, the first hand washing ritual takes place before eating the parsley. No blessing for hand washing is said and it is very common for only the leader to perform the hand washing ritual on behalf of the guests at the Seder. In reflecting on this, it seemed to me that the communal nature of The Last Supper and of the taking of Communion was a good argument for moving the hand washing ritual to the part of the Seder in which everyone would participate in hand washing.

In *A Last Supper Celebration*, the hand washing ritual was linked to the lavabo ritual and Jesus' washing of the feet of his disciples. Lavabo is a Christian hand washing ritual performed by the person who will officiate at the offering of the Eucharist/Communion.³⁰⁴ Because the next part of the Passover Seder deals with blessings over the matzah, and because the Lavabo ritual is related to the Eucharist/Communion, I felt that it would be appropriate to bring the two together at this point in the *Last Supper Seder*.

Besides moving the hand washing ritual to this point of the Seder, I also expanded the liturgy, incorporating texts from John and Luke that describe Jesus' washing of his

³⁰³ Hand washing in the Seder. <http://halachipedia.com/index.php?title=Urchatz>. Accessed Jan. 9, 2014.

³⁰⁴ Eucharist. <http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/09044b.htm>. Accessed Jan. 9, 2014.

disciples' feet.³⁰⁵ As in *A Last Supper Celebration*, participants introduce themselves to one another and then wash one another's hands. There is no prayer or this ritual since no prayer is required for Christians when washing their hands.

Motzi/Matzah

An explanation of the centrality of bread in Jewish ritual opens this segment of the Seder. The text from Matthew 26:26 is read communally.

“Now as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed and broke it and gave it to the disciples and said, ‘Take, eat, for this is my body.’”

This is followed by a communal prayer of appreciation for bread. It is followed by the “second dipping” of horseradish in charoset. A reflection on the text from Romans 15:13 is included.

“Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing.” This ends the first part of the Seder.

Shulchan Orekh – Communal Meal

What did Jesus eat at the Last Supper? It certainly wasn't gefilte fish, matzah ball soup, brisket of beef and potato kugel. However, every time I've co-led this program, the sponsoring institution has asked about this typically Ashkenazic Passover menu. There is something nice about non-Jews wanting to acquaint themselves with “modern” Eastern European cuisine. The matzah ball soup, brisket and kugel are sufficiently non-exotic so that they can be enjoyed by almost everyone. The gefilte fish is another issue.

For me, the only edible gefilte fish is that which is homemade. Anything else – frozen, jarred, “store made” – is inedible. The first time we presented *A Last Supper*

³⁰⁵ See John 13:2-5; John 22:24-27; Luke 22:26.

Celebration, the hospitality committee at the church took care of the food. They bought frozen gefilte fish, but didn't know that it had to be cooked. We had gefilte fish sushi. Now, when I work with a church on a *Last Supper Seder* dinner, I provide them with a suggested menu and give them a list of resources where they can get the food. I usually omit gefilte fish.

We discuss the menu because while I don't think that an Ashkenazic menu is necessary, I would personally be disturbed by having a dinner in which ham was featured. However, this issue brings into high relief a central question about cultural sharing and cultural appropriation. If this is a Seder for Christians, why shouldn't pork be served? On a visceral level, this thought makes me cringe, yet, if I'm scrupulously fair, I can see why some Christians might say that there is nothing wrong with serving ham. When does a "Jewish" Seder become so Christian that fundamental Jewish concepts like kashruth (the Jewish dietary laws) no longer matter? When that happens, has cultural "inspiration" turned into cultural appropriation? Or is just ok? This would be a wonderful topic for a Multifaith discussion.

Tzafun – The Redemption of the Afikomen

In *A Last Supper Celebration*, a specific liturgy for the redemption of the Afikomen was created. It worked very well. This type of liturgy does not exist in a traditional Haggadah. What usually happens is that as the table is being cleared of dishes after dessert, the leader informally tells the young people to find the Afikomen. This gives the adults a few minutes to wind up their conversations. Some people, especially people with young children, often prepare to leave at this point. Depending on how well the Afikomen was hidden (a decision made by the leader of the Seder) it can take a few

moments or a few minutes for the children to come to the table with the Afikomen. In whatever way is traditional in the family, the Afikomen is redeemed by giving the one who found it, and the other children, some sort of “ransom.” Pieces of the Afikomen or parts of the three ceremonial matzah are distributed and everyone eats the Afikomen. This is considered “dessert”. It is traditional to eat the Afikomen while reclining. Then the Seder continues with the communal blessing after the meal.

For *A Last Supper Seder*, we did not have a formal liturgy for redeeming the Afikomen. Instead, participants were invited to reflect on personal needs that require God’s redemptive blessing. One of the reasons we kept this short is that the ministers at Park Avenue Christian Church were concerned about the length of the Seder. Left to my own devices, the Seder could easily have run for three hours, not including dinner. Bowing to the ministers’ knowledge of their congregants, I worked very hard not to add to the liturgy and to keep the running time to about 90 minutes plus dinner. Since there is no traditional Jewish ceremony for the Afikomen, this was a natural place in which to avoid adding liturgy. This being said, with a community that was more tolerant of longer engagement, I would add some discussion of the personal meaning of redemption and its relationship to the Afikomen which is lost and then found.

Some of the Christian Haggadot expand the basic ritual of the Afikomen with liturgy that presents some aspect of Christian spirituality. In *Let Us Break Bread Together*, a Haggadah intended for Christians but written by a Baptist minister and a Reform rabbi, Matthew 7:7 is referenced. “Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you.”³⁰⁶ I personally found this addition quite

³⁰⁶ Smith and Shapiro. *Let Us Break Bread Together*, p. 31.

appropriate and meaningful. The sentiment is very Jewish, and I could see a “creative” Passover Haggadah incorporating this sentiment if not the actual text. Given the authorship of this Haggadah, perhaps it’s not surprising that the choice of this text presents shared Christian and Jewish sensibilities.

In the same Haggadah, the suggestion is made that the ransom for the Afikomen should be a donation to a child’s favorite charity.³⁰⁷ While this is a lovely and progressive idea which honors both Jewish and Christian ideals of the giving of charity, in practical terms I don’t see this working with Jewish children who are descended from generations of Jewish children who understand that receiving a personal reward for finding the Afikomen is written in stone as part of the Seder ritual! It might possibly work with Christian children who don’t have any Jewish friends to explain to them what is “supposed” to happen when you find the Afikomen. Since finding the Afikomen is an activity meant to encourage children to participate in the Seder, taking away their reward doesn’t seem practical to me. Perhaps some other charity component might be added to the Seder.

Roepke’s *Guide to a Christian Seder* looks at the Afikomen ritual in a different way. A traditional Passover Afikomen ritual segues into a reading of Luke 22:19. This is followed by a modified Jewish-style communal prayer of appreciation for bread. The reading that follows this reflects on the broken body of the Lamb of God:

“Let us now eat the matzah, meditating on the broken body of the Lamb of God, broken for us, and which has taken away the sin of the world. Let us allow the taste to linger in our mouths.”³⁰⁸

³⁰⁷ Ibid.

³⁰⁸ Roepke, *Guide to a Christian Seder*, pp.115-116.

The Fifth Cup Haggadah, which has a strongly Messianic bias, presents the Afikomen ritual by inserting readings from Romans 11:16-18 and Isaiah 53:5; 10-11, to suggest the idea that Jesus' coming is foretold in the Tanach, a reading of scripture that Jews reject. Following this, Luke 22:19 is read and the participants eat the Afikomen.³⁰⁹ This has the feeling of communion without explicitly being a complete Eucharist/Communion ceremony.

Barekh – Blessing After the Meal

The traditional Birkat Hamazon – the Blessing After Meals - is a lengthy communal prayer with insertions for the Sabbath (if Passover is on the Sabbath) and the festivals. On Shabbat and the festivals the Birkat Hamazon begins with the singing of Psalm 126. It takes about five minutes to sing through the blessing at a relatively brisk clip. Even the shorter “optional” version of the Birkat Hamazon takes several minutes to sing. Because this type of liturgy is not part of typical Christian worship, the Blessing After the Meal in *the Last Supper Seder* was created as a communal prayer that briefly highlights important spiritual concepts. The ideas incorporated into the liturgy are:

- God's mercy.
- God as a source of nourishment, both physical and spiritual.
- Thanksgiving for food.
- Appreciation for the house of worship in which the Last Supper Seder was presented.
- Appreciation for those were responsible for bringing the program together and leading it.

³⁰⁹ Keck, *The Fifth Cup Haggadah: A Messianic Jewish Haggadah*, pp. 25-26.

- A prayer for absent members of the community.
- God's sustaining power that supports individuals.³¹⁰

The difference between this prayer and the traditional Birkat Hamazon is that the traditional Birkat Hamazon for Passover includes the following textual inclusions not found in the *Last Supper Seder*:

- Thanks for God's liberation of the Israelites from Egyptian bondage.
- A general prayer for Jerusalem, the Land of Israel and the House of David from which the Messiah will emerge.
- On Shabbat – thanksgiving for the Sabbath.
- Thanksgiving for the festival of Passover.
- A specific prayer for the rebuilding of Jerusalem, by implication at the time of the coming of the Messiah.
- Thanksgiving for God's unique relationship with the Jewish People.
- Prayer for the coming of Elijah the Prophet.
- A specific prayer for the modern State of Israel.
- A prayer for the coming of the Messiah.
- A prayer for peace.³¹¹

In a traditional Jewish Seder, the drinking of the Third Cup and the ceremony of opening the door for Elijah follows the Birkat Hamazon. Hallel, the chanting of selected Psalms, follows the Third Cup and the Elijah ritual.

³¹⁰ *Last Supper Seder Haggadah*, p. 19.

³¹¹ *The Feat of Freedom*, pp. 78-87.

In *A Last Supper Celebration*, we chose to eliminate the Birkat Hamazon and Hallel. We did this in order to keep the Seder relatively short. This felt like a reasonable edit because Pastor Wilson and I agreed that neither the Birkat Hamazon nor the Hallel would have resonance for her parishioners. For *A Last Supper Seder*, because I had a longer time frame with which to work, I added a brief blessing after the meal followed by a shortened form of Hallel. The Third Cup and the Elijah ritual was moved to take place after the Hallel, which is not its correct order in a traditional Jewish Seder. The decision to move the Third Cup was made because the shorter blessing after the meal and the short Hallel worked well together as a liturgical segment of generalized thanksgiving.

Hallel

The Hebrew word “Hallel” means “praise.” For Jews, “The Hallel” is specifically the chanting of Psalms 113-118. When I worked on *A Last Supper Celebration*, I was a young rabbi in my first full time Reform congregation. It was not a community that was particularly interested in Hallel and in the three years that I was at Union Reform Temple in Freeport we never presented a traditional Hallel service. Given this situation, it is perhaps understandable that I might feel that Hallel would be of even less interest to Christians.

By the time I began to work on *A Last Supper Seder*, more than ten years had passed and I had a great deal of experience with the traditional Hallel. I had learned several things that made Hallel important to a new understanding of a Last Supper experience for Christians. I had discovered the text in Matthew in which he mentions that Jesus and the disciples sang a hymn after drinking a cup of wine at the Last Supper. (Matthew 26:30). I also learned that Psalms 113-118, which make up the traditional

Jewish Hallel, were sung by the priests in the Temple during the time that the Passover sacrifice was being offered.³¹² The singing of the Psalms of Hallel during the Pesach offering is one of the few historical ritual details that we can link with the historicity of the Last Supper. As such, it makes including Hallel in a Seder for Christians of great importance. Singing Hallel (or part of Hallel) is one of the few things that participants in the *Last Supper Seder* can do that somewhat mirrors Jesus' actions at the Last Supper.

In *A Last Supper Seder*, Hallel is inserted right after the Blessing After the Meal. This is a modified Hallel featuring Psalm 114 and a verse of Psalm 118, which is sung in Hebrew. The focus on Hallel at this point in the Seder serves to direct participants' focus away from the mundane action of feasting and reorients their attention to a reflection on God's goodness and salvation.

We don't know which psalm Jesus and the disciples sang at the Last Supper. Were I to rewrite *A Last Supper Seder* with less concern about "running time," I would insert the full Hallel – Psalms 113-118 - and would incorporate more of the Hebrew texts to add a feeling of authenticity and immediacy to the Hallel experience.

In a Passover Seder, Hallel is divided into two parts (never done in the synagogue.) Psalms 113 and 114 are sung before the Second Cup. In a revised *Last Supper Seder*, I would keep the Psalms together as a unit, as was done in this text, because programmatically they make more sense to be grouped together and their placement before the Third Cup preserves the intention of the traditional Jewish Seder, which is to prepare the participants to reflect on their redemption.

³¹² Daniel Landes, *My People's Passover Haggadah*, vol. 2, discussion of Hallel, re Obadiah Bertinoro commentary on Mishna Pesachim 5:2, 6, pp. 86-87.

The Third Cup – The Cup of Redemption and the Gift of Diversity

The Third Cup is linked to the Afikomen through the concept of redemption. This theme comes from the verse in Exodus associated with this cup: “I will redeem you with an outstretched arm and through extraordinary measures.” (Exodus 6:6). The concept of Diversity is related to a quote from Matthew: “Judge not that ye be not judged.” (Matthew 7:1). The liturgy in the *Last Supper Seder* Haggadah makes a direct connection between embracing diversity and personal redemption. The blessing over the Third Cup is followed by the singing of the hymn *O for a World*.

In a Passover Seder, the drinking of the Third Cup is followed by the rituals related to opening the door for Elijah. Since Christians are not waiting for Elijah, this segment of the liturgy was reimagined as a ceremony of outreach. In *A Last Supper Celebration*, participants brought canned food to be donated to a food pantry. In the *Last Supper Seder* Haggadah, the ritual of opening the door is designed around the text that opens the traditional Maggid section of the Jewish liturgy, “All who are hungry, let them enter and eat. All who are in need, let them come celebrate Passover.”³¹³ The door is opened and the lights are dimmed. Instead of a cup for Elijah, an empty Cup of Community was set on each table. During this part of the Seder, participants filled the Cup of Community from their own glasses of water to demonstrate their individual intention to work for the betterment of community and society.³¹⁴ This action is linked to a text from Matthew: 25:35-36:

“For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I

³¹³ *The Feat of Freedom*, pp. 30-31.

³¹⁴ *Last Supper Seder*, p. 22.

needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.”

A link is also drawn to Jesus’ quoting of Leviticus 19:18 “Love your neighbor as yourself.” (Matthew 22:39). The open door is presented as a symbol of a potent opportunity for personal growth and change. A period of private prayer follows the presentation of this idea.³¹⁵ This section ends with the singing of *I’m Gonna Live so God Can Use Me*. As the singing ends, the lights are turned back on.

Nirtza – Acceptance

The Hebrew word *Nirtzah* means “acceptance,” specifically God’s acceptance of our performance of the Seder. This is a relatively simple collection of rituals designed to bring the Seder to a close. Nirtzah begins with the drinking of the Fourth Cup.

The Fourth Cup – The Cup of Holiness and Salvation

The final cup is inspired by the statement in Exodus that establishes the eternal covenant between YHVH and the Jewish People. “I will take you to be my people, and I will be your God.” (Exodus 6:7). In this segment of the *Last Supper Seder*, there is a reflection on two related verses, one from Leviticus and one from 1 Peter:

I am YHVH who brought you up out of Egypt to be your God; therefore be holy, because I am holy (Leviticus 11:45).

Just as He who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do, for it is written, ‘Be holy because I am holy (1 Peter 1:15-16).

The text in the *Last Supper Seder* Haggadah reads,

These verses remind us of the strong scriptural and cultural links between Judaism and Christianity. Even though we differ in certain aspects of

³¹⁵ Ibid.

practice and faith, our sacred scriptures remind us that we share a bond of holiness and responsibility to work together to heal the world.”³¹⁶

A primary underlying theme in *A Last Supper Seder* is the way in which Jewish and Christian rituals, texts and social concerns are interwoven. In the section of the Fourth Cup, this theme is highlighted by four verses from Romans, two of which quote sources from the Tanach.

For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you profess your faith and are saved. As Scripture says, “Anyone who believes in him will never be put to shame” (Romans 10: 10-11; Romans 10:11 quoting Isaiah 28:16). “For there is no difference between Jew and Gentile—the same Lord is Lord of all and richly blesses all who call on him, for, “Everyone who calls on the name of YHVH will be saved” (Romans 10: 12-13; Romans 13 quoting Joel 2:32).

The use of this text is a wonderful illustration of how mistakes can be made when one crosses over into territory that is not one’s own. Even with good guides, and I did have good Christian guides for this project, misunderstandings can happen. As I was writing this section of the thesis, I suddenly realized that I was misreading Romans 10:12: “For there is no difference between Jew and Gentile...” In the Jewish world, the term “gentile” means someone who is Christian. That’s how I originally read this text. I thought, “What a terrific statement of interfaith unity! I have to use this in the *Last Supper Seder*.” As I was composing a lengthy explanation of this text, I suddenly realized that I was reading it incorrectly and that in this text, Jews were being compared to other people who were not followers of Jesus! Still, the sentiment that “YHVH is Lord of all” no matter its origin, is still an important concept in the modern Western world. And the verses which reflect the shared Isaiah and Joel texts clearly demonstrate the interconnectedness of Jewish and Christian scripture and values.

³¹⁶ Ibid., p. 23.

After drinking the Fourth Cup, the focus of the Seder turns to Jerusalem. In *A Last Supper Seder*, Jerusalem is presented as an ancient holy site predating Judaism and as a holy city for Jews, Christians and Moslems. This reading is followed by the song *Let There Be Peace on Earth*.

The concluding prayer is based on I Corinthians 14:15: "I will pray with my spirit, but I will also pray with my mind; I will sing with my spirit, but I will also sing with my mind." I chose this text, which is original to *A Last Supper Seder* because I felt that it articulated another central theme of the Seder, that our spirituality is informed both by the heart and by learning. A communal reading of Psalm 116:12-14 serves as a reminder of the themes of salvation, personal action and multifaith understanding.

How can I repay YHVH for all God's goodness to me? I will lift up the cup of salvation and call on the name of YHVH. I will fulfill my vows to YHVH in the presence of all God's people.

At the end of *A Last Supper Seder*, a final reading by Pastor Jackson reflected back to the verse in Matthew about Jesus and the disciples singing a hymn at the end of the Last Supper. *A Last Supper Seder* ended with the singing of the hymn *The Trees of the Field*. The evening came to a close with thanks given to all the people involved in helping with the presentation of the Seder.

Chapter 6 Reflections

Woodbury Union Church, Presbyterian – Trial Run of *A Last Supper Seder*

On Sunday, March 21, a test run of *A Last Supper Seder* was presented at Woodbury Union Church, Presbyterian in Warwick, Rhode Island. The church was established in 1907. Although the mailing address for the church is Warwick, it is actually located in Conimicut, Rhode Island, which has a population of approximately 3,350 people.³¹⁷ Woodbury is a relatively small church with an aging but active population. My clergy partner in this program was Reverend Beth Appel, the church's minister.

The event took place in the church's basement social hall. The dinner was catered by the men's club in the adjacent kitchen. Reverend Appel created attractive signage and tickets for the event. The cost of the program, including dinner, was \$5.00 per person. Approximately 60 people attended this program. Reverend Appel considered this to be an excellent turnout. In fact, it was a "sold out" event.

In the month leading up to the Seder, Reverend Appel and I discussed a number of issues relating to the text of the Haggadah, the music and the dinner. The music for the Seder was led by the church's choir and its song leader and the selections were different from the ones chosen for the Park Avenue Christian Church Seder.

³¹⁷ Demographics of Conimicut, RI. <http://conimicut.org>. Accessed Jan 12, 2014.

The participants each received a numbered Haggadah specially prepared for this event. The Haggadot were numbered so that I could be sure that none were taken home by the participants. At the end of the evening, the Haggadot were collected. The participants also received a backgrounder sheet to read as they came in.

Feedback - Woodbury Union Church, Presbyterian

For this event, I used two different questionnaires to collect data. The responses were anonymous. One questionnaire was distributed before dinner and the other was distributed after the Seder. This proved to be a somewhat cumbersome process, although we received a high proportion of completed questionnaires for both sections of the Seder.

The Part I survey asked questions about the experience of the Seder prior to the dinner. There were 14 questions.³¹⁸ 51 response sheets were returned. Not all responders answered all the questions.

The first questions were designed to determine the participants' knowledge of Judaism and the Passover Seder. While more than 50% of the participants were aware of Passover as a Jewish holiday, only a few people had ever attended a Seder.

The experience of having a printed liturgy and participating in the Seder by reading from it individually and as a group were new experiences for most of the attendees. When asked how they felt about reading individually, most responders said that they liked the sense of participation that having the book and reading aloud gave them. The few negative responses were from people who were uncomfortable reading aloud spontaneously.

³¹⁸ Survey– Parts I and II and raw data can be found in the Appendix.

A specific question asked about the prayer language. All the responses were very positive. This was an area of concern because it was important that the prayers present Christian spirituality. Here are a few specific comments.

“Expressed present concerns in language that honored heritage.”

“Prayers were simple and plain spoken.”

Participants were asked what they liked most about the first part of the Seder and their overall opinion of the experience. The comments were almost all favorable. Here are some comments.

“As a Christian it celebrates my heritage as Jesus was a Jew.”

“I learned a lot.”

“I liked the community feeling – everyone having a turn.”

“Participation made it more meaningful.” (Several similar comments about participation.)

“Good blending of traditional and present ideas and issues.”

“Intelligent combination of both religions.”

“Sensational event – awesome concept.”

Part II

At the end of the program, Part II response forms were distributed. 43 responses were submitted. While not all of the responders completed the entire 17 question survey, most completed at least the first page. The questions were designed to see how participants felt about the second half of the Seder and the program as a whole.

One of the most surprising results was that all of the people responding to the question about singing Psalm 118 in Hebrew responded positively. Positive comments

were also made about The Cup of Community, and the involvement of young people in finding the Afikomen. Participants indicated that they found the program spiritually significant and an appropriate program for either Maundy Thursday or at some point during Holy Week. Some positive comments:

“Loved it!”

“Well done!”

“Add more Hebrew elements.”

“Thank you and God Bless. I had a wonderful fulfilling time.”

“It was very good. I learned a lot and very spiritual.”

“A great experience. Very ecumenical and positive.”

“Very well done and written.”

“I liked the linkups pointing out Judaism as the root of Christianity.”

“Gives greater understanding of Jewish traditions and therefore gives greater reason to respect their traditions.”

Reflections on the Woodbury Event

This was an extremely successful program. There was a high level of enthusiasm about the event among the participants. The research results reflect this. The program ran for about two and a half hours including dinner, which was a little long for this community, but which did not seem to be so onerous that the responders were unwilling to tolerate the length of the program. Both Reverend Appel and I experienced this event as meaningful and fulfilling for ourselves and for the participants. It was extremely helpful to have the opportunity to do a “test run” of *A Last Supper Seder* prior to the official presentation at Park Avenue Christian Church.

Park Avenue Christian Church Demonstration Project

On Maundy Thursday, April 1, 2010, my demonstration project, *A Last Supper Seder*, was presented at Park Avenue Christian Church in New York City. Park Avenue Christian Church is over 200 years old and describes itself as being affiliated with the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) and the United Church of Christ. The church is home to a resident community theater group, a Twelve Step program and a synagogue with a high proportion of interfaith families and couples.

Members of “The Park,” live on the Upper East Side of Manhattan. Many are well educated and financially comfortable. They are a very privileged group and their expectations are extremely high, whether they are choosing a private school for their children or a house of worship. As a group, they are much more worldly and sophisticated than the community in Warwick.³¹⁹

Changes to the liturgy and questionnaire were made after the trial run in Warwick, Rhode Island. Some of these changes were suggested by the clergy at Park Avenue Christian Church. I made other changes based on the feedback from Warwick. The music was completely changed to reflect the preferences of the New York clergy.

Approximately 60 people attended the New York event. The group was composed of the church’s congregants, members of the resident synagogue, and my own colleagues – Jewish and Christian, friends and family. For this reason, there were more Jews

³¹⁹ These comments are based on my observation of both groups, and my intimate knowledge of the Park Avenue Christian Church community. My husband and I knew the rabbi of the resident synagogue. When he died unexpectedly, I assisted the synagogue in finding new rabbinic leadership and continued as a consultant for several years. During that time, I had the opportunity to meet and work with the ministers at Park Avenue Christian Church and participated in several joint programs.

participating in the New York event. There were also two Catholic nuns in attendance, friends of mine.

The survey document for Park Avenue Christian Church was two pages long – much shorter and more targeted than the Warwick survey document. It was bound into the Haggadah. At the end of the first part of the Seder, participants were asked to respond to nine Part I questions. At the end of the Seder, participants were asked to respond to ten Part II questions. The Haggadot were numbered and were collected at the end of the Seder. The response forms were later detached from the Haggadot. Forty seven people out of about sixty attendees completed all or part of the survey documents. Some of the respondents gave more than one answer to some of the questions.

Feedback – Park Avenue Christian Church³²⁰

Part I

Unlike the participants at Woodbury Union Church, the majority of the participants at the Park Avenue Christian Church program were familiar with Passover and had participated in Jewish Seders conducted in a home setting. Also, almost half the responders reported having read and enjoyed the introductory material that was distributed prior to the Seder. Almost none of the participants at the Woodbury event read the backgrounder.

In response to the question about having a Seder led by ministers and a rabbi, almost all responders indicated that they enjoyed the experience. Some commented:

“Eye opening experience.”

“A little weird but nice.”

³²⁰ Parts I and II with the raw data appear in the Appendix.

“Made me feel a little more on the same team.”

“Surprising, refreshing and fun!”

The Park Avenue responders almost all indicated that they enjoyed the spontaneous readings. At the Woodbury event, reading aloud was a problem for some of the attendees. Some comments about the Park Avenue reading experience:

“Brought the Seder to life.”

“Reading gives me a part to play.”

“I felt a sense of community.”

“Makes me – all of us – not observers.”

“Making it interactive makes me feel involved.”

A question about what the participants most liked about the first part of the Seder elicited the following comments:

“Interesting and important approach for both Jews and Christians.”

“Loved historic material.”

“Loved sense of community.”

“Readings were beautiful.”

“The fellowship was wonderful.”

“Marking the current 10 plagues.”

“Explanation of traditions.”

“Meaning and tasting of food.”

Experiencing it with friends and church members and learning another custom.”

“Bringing two communities of faith to one table.”

Most responders felt that the length was fine, although there were some comments that the program was too long, and a few suggestions that it could have been longer. I was not surprised that some of the participants found the program a little long since the length pushed the boundaries of what the Park Avenue Christian Church members generally find most comfortable. However, compared to a “normal” Passover Seder, *A Last Supper Seder* was significantly shorter. It was a very difficult balance to strike – long enough for a rich experience based on a very long framework but not so long that the participants become disengaged. I suspect that the four people who said the program could have been longer are Jewish!

Part II

The questions asked in the second part of the survey asked responders to evaluate the section “after dinner” and to comment on the experience as a whole. They were almost unanimously in favor of singing in Hebrew and in having more Hebrew songs to sing. Almost all the responders felt that the Seder was spiritually fulfilling. Most of the respondents said that they would be interested in experiencing the Seder again. Some comments:

“I liked the idea of reinterpreting for modern concepts.”

“It gave me hope.”

“I felt spiritually much closer to how Jesus must have experienced these events.”

“It gave me a lot to think about.” (From a Catholic nun – she signed her response

“Wonderfully creative. Well written.”

“Meaningful and joyous.”

“Beautiful to be with all these new people and celebrate with them.”

“Ended on a positive note. Hopeful.”

“Interpretation of the Seder with Christian imagery is very powerful.”

The dinner, which was catered by a local kosher caterer, was a huge hit. Since this program was presented during the intermediate days of Passover, all of the food was kosher for Passover. I felt that this was important because of the number of Jews who participated. Because the program in Warwick was held prior to Passover, the food was just “kosher style” – no meat with milk, and Passover style – dishes that would be eaten during Passover.

Final comments about the quality and meaning of the program elicited many positive responses. Some of the comments revealed that the participants found the experience to be transformational. Some comments:

“I love the idea of trying to promote understanding and connection between the faiths.

“Great collaboration between the Christian and Jewish faiths.”

“An excellent “new” Haggadah.”

“Enjoyed a lovely community experience. It was a warm and joyful evening.”

“Great balance between Jewish tradition and The Last Supper story.”

“As an interfaith person, it was interesting to connect my experience of Passover with Jesus’ life.”

“Very important to show similarities and points of reference.”

“Spiritually moving – especially the language about how we are called to serve.”

“The atmosphere was collegial, joyous – a renewal.”

“It helped develop a good sense of community and common ground.”

“I believe this is a most memorable event in my journey of faith.”

“I enjoyed sharing this special Seder with such a diverse community of people...tonight was a Holy Spirit high for me.”

“This is a very fine interfaith event and celebration. I hope it will happen in many more venues.”

“Gorgeous. Meaningful and germane to the present. A breakthrough Jewish Christian experience.”

Reflections and Lessons Learned

One of the goals of a Doctor of Ministry project is to create something that is transformative. Reading through the response forms from the Warwick and New York programs, it is clear that *A Last Supper Seder* reached many people on a deep and religiously significant level. While the comments help to paint a picture of the event, it's difficult to describe the actual experience of participating in these programs. At both events, there was a sense of high anticipation and a remarkable openness to experiencing something new. There was joy. There was a strong feeling of community. The sense of participating in something very special was palpable. For some people, the experience was transformative. For others, seeds were planted. Hopefully they will grow.

The major transformation, however, was in me. When I began this project in 1997, my main motivation was to provide churches with a viable alternative to presenting a Jewish Seder as a Christian experience. The working through of the material for *A Last Supper Celebration* was a very successful experiment in interfaith cooperation. Both Pastor Wilson and I had religious boundaries and we honored those while creating an

experience that was a meaningful spiritual experience for Christians and a good learning experience for Jews.

When I decided to revisit this material for my Doctor of Ministry project, I understood that the Jewish boundaries that I had erected when working on *A Last Supper Celebration* would have to be dismantled if I was going to craft something that would be truly meaningful for Christians. The voice of the *Last Supper Seder* Haggadah needed to be clearly and unequivocally Christian. How does someone who is Jewish accomplish such a feat? While I could rely on my Christian Site Team members for guidance, I needed to be very focused on making sure that my Jewish bias did not lead me astray.

My area of expertise in the Jewish world is in the Hebrew Bible, especially the Torah. I believe that sacred texts speak most authoritatively to us when we hear them without layers of interpretation. One of the decisions that I made in creating the new liturgy for *A Last Supper Seder* was that the liturgy of the new Haggadah should be based, as much as possible, on material from the New Testament, especially those texts dealing with the Last Supper. Through the words of the synoptic gospels and John, as well as other texts, the story of the Last Supper could be told, much as the story of the Exodus is told in the Passover Haggadah through Biblical accounts of that experience.

Struggling With the Last Supper Texts

There was just one problem for me: I had a very strong aversion to the New Testament accounts of Jesus' actions with the bread and the wine. Since these words and actions are at the core of the Last Supper, this was certainly an issue for me. How could I struggle with the texts to relate to them in a positive way? My specific issues were:

Jesus' words and actions didn't make sense to me.

The interpretations of the texts that I read in various books didn't make sense to me. I didn't buy into them.

- I didn't believe that Jesus did and said the things detailed in the Gospels.
- The ritual of transubstantiation seemed to me to be a reading back into Jesus' words rather than a ritual re-enactment of the Last Supper.
- The idea of communion as understood by various Protestant sects didn't feel comfortable to me. It seemed to me that the "modern" ritual had very little to do with what Jesus actually said and did at the Last Supper. (If, in fact, he did and said those things at all.)

The way that I dealt with these issues in 2009 when I was working on *A Last Supper Seder*, was to ignore my feelings about these texts. They were central to the ritual, so they had to be included appropriately. I relied on my Christian Site Team members to guide me in my choice and use of appropriate texts. I told myself that it didn't matter whether I agreed with these texts or not. I wasn't the audience for which they were intended.

When doing Multifaith work and in teaching comparative religion, I always make the point that you don't have to agree with another religion's words and actions; one just needs to give every religion the space to express its religious rituals as long as those actions are peaceful and don't intrude on other religions. I relied heavily on that concept as I was writing the Haggadah for *A Last Supper Seder*. However, as a student of sacred texts, it bothered me that I couldn't find a way to understand and appreciate the New Testament texts that I found so troubling.

After the presentation of *A Last Supper Seder* at Park Avenue Christian Church, I put the pursuit of my Doctor of Ministry on hold for financial reasons. A few months later, I was hired by Berkeley College to teach comparative religion, bio ethics and science. My students were primarily Christian or Muslim, many of them very religious. I also had a great number of foreign students from all over the world. Very few of my students had ever met someone Jewish, and none of them had ever met a female rabbi.

Working in this diverse community, it was necessary for me to open myself to many different types of religious and cultural wisdom. It was liberating. In my religion classes, I taught the story of Adam and Eve through the words of the Torah and the Koran and the interpretations of the Christian church. I also read and taught Hindu and Buddhist material. Reading these texts and related commentaries, I began to develop more of an openness to appreciating a broad range of the world of the spirit. In order to teach my students, it was necessary for me to challenge myself to go deeper into these texts. As I did this, I grew spiritually and deepened my ability to accept texts that express ideas radically different from those with which I felt most comfortable.

When I began to write my thesis in the summer of 2013, I found that the New Testament texts that had been so problematic for me were not quite so opaque. I still didn't understand them, but I was no longer put off by them. Instead of reading commentaries about those texts, I looked at them through the lens of *pshat*, the simple meaning of the text that is one of four different approaches that Jews use to understand the Tanach. Stripped of later rituals and interpretations, I was able to see Jesus' behavior at the Last Supper as very Jewish. As one of my professors in rabbinical school once said, "Jesus was doing midrash." Jews "do" midrash all through the Passover Seder.

This insight made Jesus' behavior more understandable to me. What he said and what he meant became not as important to me as his behavior. Once I could put Jesus' actions into a Passover context, they no longer troubled me. I've sat through many Passover Seders where I didn't agree with some of the statements made by the leader. Those sayings didn't lessen my connection to the ritual itself.

There was another connection that I made during the writing of this dissertation that helped me to feel comfortable with the issue of transubstantiation and communion. In early January, when I was hard at work on this document, the Jewish festival of Tu B'Shevat was celebrated.

Tu B'Shevat is one of four Jewish New Years, in this case, the New Year for Trees. In the late 17th century, a Seder for Tu B'Shevat was created by Kabbalists in Israel. One of the basic concepts of this mystical Seder is that the participant, through eating certain fruits and nuts, incorporates into himself (herself) the spiritual dimensions of the food that is ingested.³²¹ Although I have been aware of this ritual and concept for many years, I had never really considered how close this idea is to the Christian rituals of transubstantiation and communion. While there is a big difference for someone Jewish between the idea that one becomes united with a "human" through partaking of the Eucharist and the ingesting of spiritual material through eating fruit, there is not that much difference between the concept of eating the fruits and nuts at the Tu B'Shevat Seder and the concepts of some Protestant denominations that see the bread and wine as symbols rather than as the literal body and blood of Jesus.³²² This new appreciation of the

³²¹ Pri Etz Hadar Siddur. <http://opensiddur.org/contributions/pri-etz-hadar>. Accessed Jan. 14, 2014.

³²² Communion in Protestant Sects. <http://christianityinview.com/comparison.html> Accessed Jan. 14, 2014.

similarity between Jewish and Christian spiritual behavior also helped me to look more objectively at the New Testament texts about the Last Supper.

Another insight that helped me had to do with my disbelief about Jesus' statements at the Last Supper. In describing the various elements of the Passover Seder and the texts upon which those elements are based, I began to reflect on whether or not I literally believed in each text in the Torah. Did I really believe, for example, that Moses went to Pharaoh and said, "Let My People Go?" I generally read Hebrew texts very critically and with an eye towards the social and political influences that may have shaped the text. Did I really believe in the literal truth of the story of the Exodus as told in the second book of the Torah?

The answer is "yes" and "no." I believe those stories absolutely in the way that one accepts a sacred myth and incorporates it into one's view of the world and one's sense of self. I am willing to state, however, that if one could travel back in time and watch the story of the Exodus unfold, the exact words and actions being played out might be different from those which are set in stone in the Book of Exodus. I feel this way about many parts of the Tanach, and especially the Torah. The duality doesn't bother me. The two views of the text work on different levels for me.

I realized that I could approach the New Testament texts about the Last Supper in a similar way. I could accept the "truth" of the text about the bread and wine as a sacred myth or significant foundational text for Christians while acknowledging that the report of those actions might have been crafted for specific reasons at some time after the fact. In this way, I was able to appreciate the power and the beauty of those texts and their intense meaning for Christians without feeling "Jewishly challenged" by them.

For some Christians, my statement that I relate to the Last Supper texts as “sacred myth” might be disturbing. For some Jews, it would be disturbing to read that I relate to some texts in the Torah as “sacred myth” and not literally God’s word. I would never want to take away the immediacy or “truth” of these texts from anyone who wishes to believe in their literal truth. I am merely describing how I was able to come closer to a deep connection with the Last Supper texts, texts that had been baffling and disturbing to me for many years. This was my process. It need not be anyone else’s. I am strengthened and changed by my ability to open up to these texts and to appreciate their beauty and wisdom within the context of my own understanding.

Tweaking A Last Supper Seder Haggadah

In the Haggadah for *A Last Supper Seder*, all the Biblical texts are presented without nuance or comment. It was my intent to try to bring participants into the Upper Room by letting the texts speak for themselves. I believe that this sense of immediacy is one of the elements that made this program so successful.

Looking back at the *Last Seder Supper* Haggadah after a period of almost four years, I see things I’d like to change or tweak a little. Most of these things are minor. However, there is one thing that surprises me. There is no communion opportunity or even a suggestion that communion might be incorporated into the ritual. There is also no discussion of how communion developed from Jesus’ words at the Last Supper. This insight would not have been possible for me had I not been able to resolve my issues with the New Testament texts about the Last Supper.

The absence of the option of celebrating communion in some way, of suggesting that some communities might want to celebrate it, or at least including some educational

statement about the development of Communion from the Last Supper texts is surprising to me. One of the specific questions I asked my Site Team Christian clergy was whether or not we should offer communion as part of the Seder. They didn't seem to think it was important. The ministers with whom I worked in Warwick and New York, and the faculty, students and staff at New York Theological Seminary who workshopped the Haggadah text with me didn't suggest that communion be incorporated in any way into the *Last Supper Seder*. I'm left wondering "why wasn't this part of the discussion?" I can accept that I might miss this opportunity, perhaps because I was still thinking "Seder." But why wouldn't my Christian advisors suggest this? Did we miss an important teaching opportunity? Should the Eucharist/Communion be incorporated into a Seder for Christians? Should this ritual have been incorporated into *A Last Supper Seder*?

As I was preparing my proposal for this project, one of my professors made the comment "of course you will have to deal with the Eucharist." I wasn't exactly sure what he meant. When I created *A Last Supper Celebration*, Pastor Wilson and I never discussed the way in which Eucharistic or Communion material, language or communion itself might be factored into the liturgy. While making mention of the Last Supper and Jesus' references to the bread and wine,³²³ we never attempted to incorporate a specific exploration of the Eucharist/Communion elements of the Last Supper into the ritual we had created. In this case, I think this didn't come up because we were both focused on creating an appropriate "Seder" experience for her community and communion doesn't fit into a Seder format. The ritual also had a strong "interfaith" slant that probably acted against our considering communion as part of that program.

³²³ See Matthew 26:26-29.

When I began to work on *A Last Supper Seder*, I recruited two Christian ministers and a Christian lay leader to help me think through the Christian religious aspects of the ritual. We began with a review of the Haggadah for *A Last Supper Celebration* and a list of questions about what they felt should be discussed to prepare a new ritual. One of the questions I posed was, “Are there any Christian ritual concepts that you feel **should be considered for addition** to the outline of this new ritual, **i.e. some treatment of the Eucharist/Communion?**” Clearly, this issue was on my mind, but my advisors didn’t engage me in a discussion of this issue.

As I began to prepare for the presentation of the Seder in Warwick, Reverend Appel suggested some changes in the liturgy, which I incorporated. Prior to the program at Park Avenue Christian Church, I asked Pastors Jackson and Kinnamon for their input on the text as well. This text was also reviewed in a workshop by students and faculty at New York Theological Seminary. No one suggested that we incorporate material that spoke more directly to the Eucharist/Communion.

The Christian Haggadot that I have looked through do not necessarily make the Eucharist/Communion a focal point of their liturgy, although many of them quote Matthew 26:26-27 or Luke 22:19-20. One Christian Haggadah that specifically introduces the Eucharist/Communion is an on-line Haggadah adapted by Dennis Bratcher and sponsored by the Christian Resource Institute.³²⁴ In this Haggadah, Bratcher introduces the Eucharist/Communion with the Third Cup although he does not refer to any Biblical text.³²⁵ However, Luke 22:20 is clearly a suggestive foundation text for the

³²⁴ Christian Resource Institute. <http://www.cresourcei.org/haggadah.html>. Accessed Jan. 15, 2014.

³²⁵ Ibid.

idea that at least part of the Eucharist/Communion is related to the Third Cup, which comes after the eating of the Afikomen at the end of the Passover meal.

“In the same way, **after the supper** he took the cup, saying, “This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which is poured out for you.”

Another Christian Haggadah, produced by Providence Presbyterian Church, adds Communion at the end of the Seder. This section, titled, *Gathering for the Last Supper*, follows the step of Opening the Door for the Elijah. The ritual includes a call to worship and reflection, a communal prayer of confession, the reading of Luke 22:14-20, participation in communion, a Prayer of Thanksgiving and a benediction.³²⁶

In writing *A Last Supper Seder*, I was aware that there is a wide range of practice in the Christian community with respect to a number of ritual areas: prayer language and the way that God is referenced, the structure of prayers, the usage of Trinitarian language, and the way in which the Eucharist/Communion is celebrated. The first three items were relatively simple to deal with. With the help of my Site Team, we chose neutral language that could be altered by various communities if so desired. However, the fact that we did not incorporate at least a nod to the Eucharist/Communion is much more problematic, at least for me.

A Jewish Approach

If the Eucharist/Communion were a Jewish ritual, I would know exactly how to deal with it in a Seder. It would have its official place in the Haggadah and it would be explained and celebrated. An interesting example of how this might be handled can be seen in the Passover ritual of Korech.

³²⁶ Haggadah, Providence Presbyterian Church. Included in appendix.

After eating the maror (bitter herb) dipped in charoset in the step called *Maror*, the Haggadah directs participants to take some of the maror (some people also add charoset) and put it between two pieces of the bottom of the three matzot to make a sandwich. (At many Seders, any matzah that is on the table may be used for this step.) There is no blessing for this ritual because the blessing over bread has already been said and this is sufficient for anything that is eaten afterwards.

The text of the Haggadah explains,

This is **a reminder** of the Temple and **a reminder** of the practice of Hillel. While the Temple was in existence, Hillel would make a sandwich of the Pesach offering (the lamb) with matzah and maror, and eat all three together in fulfillment of the verse, ‘with matzot and maror they shall eat it.’³²⁷

While this is fundamentally a text that goes back to the Tannaitic Period (pre-Mishnaic – 225 C.E.) we don’t find a fuller explanation of this ritual until the Modern Period, notably in the Prague Haggadah, the first illustrated Haggadah to be printed in Central Europe after the expulsion of the Jews from Spain in 1492. This Haggadah was published in 1526.³²⁸ It is one of the earliest Ashkenazic Haggadot to contain the text of Korech that we know today.³²⁹

The text of Korech has an echo of the accounts of Jesus’ words as reported by Luke.

And when He had taken some bread and given thanks, He broke it and gave it to them, saying, “This is My body which is given for you; **do this in remembrance of Me.**” And in the same way He took the cup after they

³²⁷ *Feast of Freedom*, p.75; citing from Numbers 9:11.

³²⁸ Prague Haggadah Information.

<http://www.jafi.org/JewishAgency/English/Jewish+Education/Compelling+Content/Jewish+Time/Festivals+and+Memorial+Days/Pesach/Haggadot/The+Prague+Haggadah.htm>. Accessed Jan. 15, 2014.

³²⁹ Prague Haggadah, published by Gershom Cohen, Prague, 1526. Reproduction: Jerusalem; Ravin Printing Enterprises Ltd., 1987.

had eaten, saying, “This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which is poured out for you.”³³⁰

The text of Korech and the text of Luke deal with ritual actions that are specifically performed in order to perpetuate an active memory of the ritual. The active remembrance of the Exodus from Egypt and God’s salvation of the Israelites is a theme which is reiterated throughout the entire Passover Haggadah. After the recitation of the Four Questions, the three ceremonial matzot are uncovered and the beginning of the tale of salvation is read beginning with the word:

“We were slaves to Pharaoh in Mitzrayim...” At the end of the passage we read, “Even if all of us were scholars, even if all of us were sages, even if all of us were elders, even if all of us were learned in the Torah, it would still be our duty to tell the story of the exodus from Mitzrayim. Moreover, whoever elaborates upon the story of the Exodus deserves praise.”³³¹

This text is based on Deut.16: 1-3:

Observe the month of Aviv and celebrate the Passover of YHVH your God, because in the month of Aviv he brought you out of Egypt by night. Sacrifice as the Passover to YHVH your God an animal from your flock or herd at the place YHVH will choose as a dwelling for his Name. Do not eat it with bread made with yeast, but for seven days eat unleavened bread, the bread of affliction, because you left Egypt in haste—**so that all the days of your life you may remember the time of your departure from Egypt.**

In other words, the concept of remembrance is active - we remember by doing. Similarly, Jesus’ actions and words with the bread and wine are completely “Jewish.” The concept that we “remember” and pass on important values through repetitive ritual actions is based on a deep Jewish understanding of Torah.

³³⁰ See Luke 22:19-20.

³³¹ *Feast of Freedom*, pp. 34-35.

There are several texts that reflect this idea, either explicitly or implicitly. In Numbers we read:

YHVH said to Moses, “Speak to the Israelites and say to them: ‘Throughout the generations to come you are to make tassels on the corners of your garments, with a blue cord on each tassel. You will have these tassels to look at **and so you will remember** all the commands of YHVH, that you may obey them and not prostitute yourselves by chasing after the lusts of your own hearts and eyes. **Then you will remember to obey all my commands** and will be consecrated to your God. I am YHVH your God, who brought you out of Egypt to be your God. I am YHVH your God’” (Num. 15:37-41).

Proper behavior based on remembrance of the historical circumstances of the Israelites is mandated in Exodus 23:9: “Do not oppress a stranger; you yourselves know how it feels to be strangers, because you were strangers in Egypt.” In the Hebrew text, the word for the verb “to know” is used rather than the verb “to remember.” However, the proper understanding of the text is that the Jewish people retain an historical knowledge of the experience of Egypt. This is a form of remembrance. This concept is reiterated in Leviticus 19:33-34:

When a stranger resides among you in your land, do not mistreat them.
The stranger residing among you must be treated as your native-born.
Love them as yourself, for you were foreigners in Egypt.

The issue of how to treat the Eucharist/Communion is complicated by the four different texts through which Jesus’ words and actions are transmitted.³³² In writing *A Last Supper Celebration* and later *A Last Supper Seder*, I relied on my Christian partners to suggest the texts that should be incorporated into the Haggadah. I assumed that their choices would be more informed than mine might be, given that, especially with respect to the Last Supper, there are four different texts to choose from. At the time, I was like the

³³² See Matthew 26:26-29; Mark 14:22-25; Luke 22:14-20; 1 Corinthians 11:23-26.

“Child Who Does Not Know How to Ask” in the Haggadah. I didn’t know what questions to ask my advisors about their choices. Now, having done a great deal of reading and reflection on this topic, I am more like the Simple Child: I have the questions but not the answers.

Questions

If I were to edit the *Last Supper Seder* Haggadah for publications, here are some of the questions I would ask my Christian advisors:

- Should we have a separate section for the celebration of the Eucharist/Communion?
- If we don’t write in a Eucharist/Communion liturgy, should we indicate where the celebration of the Eucharist/Communion might fit into this ritual?
- Should we address the fact that there are four different texts that refer to the Eucharist/Communion? If so, how should we do this?
- Should we choose one text – Luke, for example, since it seems to be considered the most authoritative with respect to the bread and the wine³³³ - and use that text exclusively when we want to refer to Jesus’ actions during the Last Supper?
- In *A Last Supper Seder*, Jesus’ actions with the bread and wine are detailed in the historical section of the Haggadah. We also reference his actions in the section in which we bless the bread. However, this text feels

³³³Last Supper Texts. <http://www.biblestudytools.com/encyclopedias/isbe/lords-supper-Eucharist/Communion.html>. Accessed Jan. 15, 2014.

like an “add on.” Should there be some discussion at this point which discusses the religious significance of Jesus’ actions with the bread and wine; should there be a direct reference to the Eucharist/Communion and its importance in Christian worship?

- Should we incorporate some discussion of the different names for the ritual that Jesus instituted? The Lord’s Supper, Eucharist, Communion?
- Since the text in Luke clearly states that Jesus took a cup of wine **after the meal was finished**, should the Third Cup be dedicated to the new covenant that Jesus suggests is created by drinking it?

Part of the transformative nature of this experience for me is that I can now ask these questions and, even more importantly, I have opinions about how they might be answered. Having struggled with the texts and the dynamics of creating a new ritual from an old ritual, I have a sense of ownership of this material that I didn’t have when I began this journey. Although I was anxious to complete my Doctor of Ministry degree in three years, I’m glad that I had enough of a break to enable me to get some distance from the project and to build important skills that made it possible for me to write about this experience with enhanced depth, maturity and understanding.

A Final Personal Reflection – The Power of Passover

I was raised in the 1950’s in a Jewish neighborhood – East Flatbush in Brooklyn – that was peopled by immigrant families from Russia and the Ukraine. All the people on our block were Jewish; some were related to us. My parents and my younger brother lived in a two family attached brick house with my maternal grandparents who had

immigrated from the Ukraine in 1920. My grandfather was an ideological Communist who had deserted from the Red Army because my grandmother told him, according to our family legend, “Sam, you give your boots to your men and the senior officers take them for themselves. This is not true Communism. We should go to America.” My grandfather went AWOL with my grandmother, his wife, and with his entire family – parents and a number of younger siblings. They came to Ellis Island and settled in Brooklyn.

My grandparents had no interest in religion and a great deal of interest in cultural Judaism. My grandfather’s mother was extremely religious. Because of her, my brother and I were given Hebrew names. My grandparents were very proud to be Americans. They both learned to speak, read and write English and became citizens as soon as possible.

My mother was sent to a Yiddish school so she could learn to speak, read and write Yiddish, one of the three languages that my grandparents spoke. They also spoke fluent Russian. Because my grandparents believed that Christmas was an American holiday, beginning with my mother’s fifth birthday, there was always a Christmas tree in our home and later in my home until my son, Justin (now a rabbi) became a bar mitzvah, an event that coincided with my interest in becoming a rabbi.

From a very young age, I was fascinated by religion, ritual and spirituality. When I was eleven, my parents sent me to a summer camp that celebrated the Sabbath every week. This was a new experience for me and for many months after I returned home, I insisted that we light Sabbath candles on Friday night. My parents were not particularly supportive of this behavior. When I asked to go to religious school, I was told that

religious education wasn't important for girls. I was very disappointed but I never lost my interest in religion and spirituality. I used to go to our local library, sit in a corner and read books about nuns, the only available female religious model in the mid 1950's.

I remember attending a traditional Seder at the home of religious friends of ours in Brooklyn. I must have been about ten at the time. It was long, it was mostly in Hebrew, which I didn't understand, but I was fascinated by the entire ritual. I remember walking home with my parents and hearing them complain about the length of the Seder and the quality of the food. (In truth, my mother and grandmother were gifted cooks and the person who prepared the food for the Seder was not.)

Fast forward to 1983. Neil (my husband) and I left San Francisco, where we had been living and working for the past four years, and returned to New York. We joined Central Synagogue, a prominent Reform synagogue in Manhattan and became very involved in communal activities. I participated in the Women's organization and was asked to participate in a program to develop a Women's Seder. In the early 1980's, this was very daring. Thus began my fascination with Passover and with the Haggadah. I began to write Haggadot for our family Seders, which I organized, cooked for, and led.

In 1985, I applied to Hebrew Union College, the Reform Rabbinical Seminary. In the course of the interview, I talked about my fascination with Haggadot and the ways in which I had crafted Haggadot for our family Seders that included my secular parents, my young teenage son, and my Christian brother and sister-in-law and their young children as well as a changing cast of Jewish and Christian guests.

One of the faculty members, a venerable Reform Rabbi well into his 70's said to me, "The Haggadah has been around for almost two millennia. What makes you think

that you have the right to change it?” I was taken aback, but explained that I felt that it was important to meet the needs of people who were not being reached by traditional Haggadot. I said that I was interested in doing this type of outreach as a rabbi. I did not get into Hebrew Union College.

Why has the Passover Seder continued to fascinate me and compel me to continue to examine and tinker with it? When I was growing up, my parents, especially my mother, (why does it always come back to our parents?) told me frequently about all the things that I couldn’t accomplish because I was female, Jewish, not talented enough and not attractive enough. Although I didn’t believe my parents, I had to fight very hard to hold onto my sense of self as a competent, independent person whose dreams could somehow come true.

The Passover Seder explores the concept of personal freedom as well as communal freedom. It tells us that we can overcome great obstacles and achieve our dreams, even if at times they seem impossible. Perhaps this explains my strong attachment to the Passover liturgy and ritual. Passover affirms me in my desire to reach for the stars. Passover says “yes” to dreams.

As I write this dissertation, my 65th birthday is approaching. At one time, I might have been chained by the prevalent idea that at the age of 65 one should be wrapping up one’s life. Part of the transformative nature of my Doctor of Ministry journey is that I believe that I am actually at the beginning of a new and exciting phase of my life. I have always enjoyed working “on the edge.” I don’t know what the future holds, but I am excited to discover what awaits me.

At the beginning of this thesis I raised the question, “What’s a nice Jewish girl doing with a project like this?” Having come to the end of this specific journey I would answer by saying, “Whatever she wants to do.

Appendices

Seder Plates

A Last Supper Celebration – Baldwin, New York 1997-1998

Media

1997 Invitation to Elected Officials
1997 Media Release
1997 Photo Opportunity Release
1998 Religion and Ethics Query
1998 General Media Release
Baldwin Herald article – 1998
Baldwin Freeport Citizen article - 1998
Newsday article - 1997
Lutheran Woman Article – 2001

Last Supper Celebration

Leaders' Outline

Last Supper Seder Haggadah

A Last Supper Seder – Warwick, RI 2010

Handout

Last Supper Seder Haggadah
Suggestions for Dinner and Recipies
Photo and Video Release
Woodbury Survey, Parts I & II
Survey Results
Photos
 Signage
 Table Setup

Pastor Beth Lights Candles
Rabbi David explains the Shmurah Matzah
Hand washing

**A Last Supper Seder Haggadah – Demonstration Project
at Park Avenue Christian Church (PACC), New York, York, NY**

Invitation
Flyer for Publicity
Newsletter Copy
Introductory Handout
Last Supper Seder Haggadah
PACC Survey – Parts I & II
Survey Results
Photos
 Guest Table Setup
 Leaders' Table
 Dinner Buffet
 Multifaith Guests
 Finishing Dessert
Follow Up Note from Pastor Jackson

Traditional Jewish Seder Songs

Eliahu HaNavi (Elijah the Prophet)
Miriam HaN'viah (Miriam the Prophet)
The Four Questions – Ma Nishtana

Suggested Songs for *A Last Supper Seder Haggadah*

The First Cup

I'm On My Way
This is a Day of New Beginnings
Fill Up My Cup

The Narrative Story Telling

Let My People Go
O Mary, Don't You Weep

Before the Second Cup

An Upper Room Did Our Lord Prepare

The Third Cup

O for A World

Before the Fourth Cup

Take My Life and Let it Be
I'm Gonna Live So God Can Use Me

Songs for Peace

If I Had a Hammer (The Hammer Song)
Down By the Riverside
We'll Understand It Better By and By
We Shall Overcome

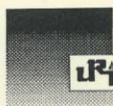
Providence Presbyterian Church Haggadah with Communion Service

Seder Plates





www.shutterstock.com · 165222140



Union Reform Temple



Rabbi Jo David • 516-623-1810

TO: **FREEPORT/BALDWIN ELECTED OFFICIALS AND NY STATE SENATORS**
FROM: **RABBI JO DAVID**

Dear Friends,

If you are in the area, I hope that you will be able to join us on this evening to participate in a truly unique program. A representative from your office would also be most welcome.

**RABBI/MINISTER COLLABORATION RESULTS IN NEW CHRISTIAN RITUAL
"LAST SUPPER CELEBRATION" TO BE HELD ON MARCH 26TH
7 P.M. - 10 P.M.
BETHLEHEM LUTHERAN CHURCH, BALDWIN, NY**

Baldwin, New York...March 11, 1997...Rabbi Jo David, Union Reform Temple in Freeport, and Pastor Kimberly Wilson, Bethlehem Lutheran Church in Baldwin, have joined forces to create a new ritual for Christians. Called a "Last Supper Celebration," this ritual, patterned on a Passover seder, attempts to solve the problem of churches that want to connect with the Jewish roots of the Last Supper. Until now, most churches have assumed that having a traditional Jewish Passover seder was the only solution. However, for Jews and for many Christians, the appropriation of Passover rituals and prayers by Christians is religiously inappropriate. In addition, the Passover seder does little to address real Christian spiritual needs.

Recently, Pastor Wilson approached Rabbi David for help with a seder for her church. Rabbi David suggested that the two work together to create a ritual and liturgy that would be appropriate for Christians while retaining an understanding of the Jewish rituals that served as a background for the Last Supper.

The result, a "Last Supper Celebration" will be held at Bethlehem Lutheran Church on Wednesday, March 26th from 7 - 10p.m. The date was picked to coincide with Christian Holy Week rather than with Passover, and is just prior to Maundy Thursday, the traditional date of the Last Supper. The program will be lead by Rabbi David and Pastor Wilson and will include a sampling of traditional Passover foods, dessert and tea and coffee.

While not intended as an "interfaith" seder, the program is open to people of all faiths as a unique experience in learning about and honoring one another's faith traditions. Reservations are necessary. The cost of the event is \$4 per person with a maximum charge of \$10 per family. Scholarships are available. This program is not suitable for young children.

For reservations, which will be accepted until March 21, please call Pastor Wilson at 516-223-3400. For more information, please call Rabbi David at 516-623-1810.

#



475 North Brookside Avenue • Freeport, New York 11520-1099
HOME 516-621-8382 • FAX 516-623-7618 • E Mail - Soul Gal @AOL.com



Union Reform Temple

Rabbi Jo David • 516-623-1810

For Release to Electronic Media

**Contact: Rabbi Jo David
516-623-1810 or
beeper - 1-917-706-1803**

EXCELLENT PHOTO OPPORTUNITIES

PLEASE NOTE:

***DEMONSTRATION OF CANDLE LIGHTING, HAND WASHING, EXPLANATION OF
SEDER PLATE, RECITATION OF THE 10 PLAGUES, WELCOMING ELIJAH
CAN BE ARRANGED PRIOR TO 7 P.M. IF NECESSARY***

**"LAST SUPPER CELEBRATION"
TO BE LED BY RABBI AND MINISTER
WEDNESDAY EVENING, MARCH 26TH
7 P.M. - 10 P.M.
BETHLEHEM LUTHERAN CHURCH,
1375 GRAND AVENUE,
BALDWIN, NY**

Baldwin, New York...March 25, 1997...Rabbi Jo David, Union Reform Temple in Freeport, and Pastor Kimberly Wilson, Bethlehem Lutheran Church in Baldwin, will lead a "Last Supper Celebration," at Bethlehem Lutheran Church on Wednesday, March 26 at 7 p.m.

This new ritual, created by Rabbi David and Pastor Wilson, is loosely patterned on the traditional Passover seder. It attempts to present an appropriate ritual experience for Christians who would like to better understand the Passover experience of Jesus in the context of modern Christian spirituality. A sampling of traditional Passover foods, dessert and tea and coffee will be part of the program.

While not intended as an "interfaith" seder, the program is open to people of all faiths as a unique experience in learning about and honoring one another's faith traditions.

#



475 North Brookside Avenue • Freeport, New York 11520-1099
HOME 516-621-8382 • FAX 516-623-7618 • E Mail - Soul Gal @AOL.com

Union Reform Temple



Rabbi Jo David • 516-623-1810

TO: **FREEPORT/BALDWIN ELECTED OFFICIALS AND NY STATE SENATORS**
FROM: **RABBI JO DAVID**

Dear Friends,

If you are in the area, I hope that you will be able to join us on this evening to participate in a truly unique program. A representative from your office would also be most welcome.

**RABBI/MINISTER COLLABORATION RESULTS IN NEW CHRISTIAN RITUAL
"LAST SUPPER CELEBRATION" TO BE HELD ON MARCH 26TH
7 P.M. - 10 P.M.
BETHLEHEM LUTHERAN CHURCH, BALDWIN, NY**

Baldwin, New York...March 11, 1997...Rabbi Jo David, Union Reform Temple in Freeport, and Pastor Kimberly Wilson, Bethlehem Lutheran Church in Baldwin, have joined forces to create a new ritual for Christians. Called a "Last Supper Celebration," this ritual, patterned on a Passover seder, attempts to solve the problem of churches that want to connect with the Jewish roots of the Last Supper. Until now, most churches have assumed that having a traditional Jewish Passover seder was the only solution. However, for Jews and for many Christians, the appropriation of Passover rituals and prayers by Christians is religiously inappropriate. In addition, the Passover seder does little to address real Christian spiritual needs.

Recently, Pastor Wilson approached Rabbi David for help with a seder for her church. Rabbi David suggested that the two work together to create a ritual and liturgy that would be appropriate for Christians while retaining an understanding of the Jewish rituals that served as a background for the Last Supper.

The result, a "Last Supper Celebration" will be held at Bethlehem Lutheran Church on Wednesday, March 26th from 7 - 10p.m. The date was picked to coincide with Christian Holy Week rather than with Passover, and is just prior to Maundy Thursday, the traditional date of the Last Supper. The program will be lead by Rabbi David and Pastor Wilson and will include a sampling of traditional Passover foods, dessert and tea and coffee.

While not intended as an "interfaith" seder, the program is open to people of all faiths as a unique experience in learning about and honoring one another's faith traditions. Reservations are necessary. The cost of the event is \$4 per person with a maximum charge of \$10 per family. Scholarships are available. This program is not suitable for young children.

For reservations, which will be accepted until March 21, please call Pastor Wilson at 516-223-3400. For more information, please call Rabbi David at 516-623-1810.

#

475 North Brookside Avenue • Freeport, New York 11520-1099
HOME 516-621-8382 • FAX 516-623-7618 • E Mail - Soul Gal @AOL.com

Rabbi Jo David
17 East 67th Street
New York, New York 10021
(212) 249-0799 phone • (212) 249-5142 fax • Soul Gal@AOL.com

FAX COVER SHEET

DATE: March 30, 1998
FROM: Rabbi Jo David
TO: Kim Lawton, Religion and Ethics

NUMBER OF PAGES PLUS COVER SHEET: 3

I thought that you might have some interest in this story. Pastor Wilson and I have worked closely together on this project, which is an attempt to help churches celebrate the Last Supper without inappropriately using Jewish rituals and texts. On Thursday of this week, we'll be presenting our second program, revised from last year.

What Pastor Wilson and I are doing is unique. We are working together with respect of one another's religious values and traditions to create a ritual and liturgy that meets the deep spiritual need of Christians to connect with Jesus Jewish roots. This is very far from the "Messianic" haggadahs and seders that currently exist. Besides presenting this new ritual, we're also working on preparing this material for publication for use by churches of many different Christian denominations.

Hope to hear from you.
Rabbi Jo David

MEDIA PACKET

For General Release Contact: Rabbi Jo David, Jewish Appleseed Foundation, Inc.,
(212) 249-0799 and Pastor Kimberly A. Wilson, Bethlehem
Lutheran Church, (516) 223-3400.

SECOND ANNUAL "LAST SUPPER" CELEBRATION HIGHLIGHTS PASSOVER RITUALS OF JESUS' TIME

Baldwin, New York, March 10, 1998. On Thursday, April 2nd from 7-9:30 p.m. at Bethlehem Lutheran Church, 1375 Grand Avenue, Baldwin, NY, Rabbi Jo David, Executive Director of the Jewish Appleseed Foundation and Adjunct Professor of Religion at Malloy College and Pastor Kimberly Wilson of Bethlehem Lutheran Church will jointly lead a "Last Supper" Celebration. A sampling of Passover foods will be served as well as coffee, tea, and dessert for all. The new liturgy is based on Passover rituals of Jesus' time but reflects modern Christian spirituality. This program was introduced last year by Rabbi David and Pastor Wilson and has been further developed for this year's celebration.

The impetus for this program is the growing interest in Christian communities to celebrate the Last Supper. In the past, Churches wishing to do this would hold a traditional Jewish Seder using a Jewish Haggadah. Using a Haggadah to celebrate Jesus' Last Supper is historically inaccurate because the Haggadah as we know it was not developed until many centuries later. Perhaps more importantly, usurpation of a Jewish religious ritual and liturgy for the fulfillment of Christian spiritual needs is religiously inappropriate and spiritually unsatisfying for Christians. The new liturgy borrows from the form of a Seder but expresses Christian religious values and rituals while honoring the Seder's Jewish roots.

This "Last Supper" celebration will be held exactly one week prior to Maundy Thursday when tradition teaches that Jesus celebrated the Last Supper. While not intended as an ecumenical Seder, the celebration is open to participation by people of all faiths as a unique experience in learning about and honoring one another's faith traditions.

Reservations are necessary and may be made by calling Bethlehem Lutheran Church at (516) 223-3400. The cost for the event is \$4 per person—maximum \$10 per family—and scholarships are available. Reservations will be accepted up until March 30. For additional information, call Rabbi Jo David at (212) 249-0799 or Pastor Kimberly Wilson at (516) 223-3400.

#

NV

HERALD

75 CENTS
MARCH 25 - 31, 1998

ONLINE
ald.com

the document, contrary to the steps in the process: regret, public apology and avoiding the wrong if the opportunity arises again. The first step is private, the second is shared, and the third goes farther, it is ritual. The Vatican has

7 to pay a visit

both adults and children. No one traveling along Sunrise Highway will be able to miss the 70-foot Ferris wheel, or "The Zipper," with its two swinging arms, or "The Himalaya," an extremely fast backward-forward ride featured at Hershey Park in Pennsylvania. For those who prefer to keep their pancakes in their stomachs, there will also be a carousel and several games along the fairway.

Those who chose to stay through lunch or dinner (the carnival will be open from 5 - 11 P.M. on the two weeknights, and from 1 - 11 P.M. on the weekends), can buy the usual sausage and peppers, hamburgers, hot dogs, pizza and zeppoles.

Chamber officials are hoping for a big turnout for the carnival, which is one of its biggest fundraisers. "Everyone that comes to these events is supporting the Chamber of Commerce and we in turn support Baldwin by trying to make it a better place to live and work," Ms. Foley said.

"Last Supper" service to highlight Passover rituals

Two local religious leaders will hold a celebration honoring both Easter and Passover next week. On Thursday, April 2 from 7-9:30 P.M. at Bethlehem Lutheran Church, 1375 Grand Avenue, Rabbi Jo David, executive director of the Jewish Appleseed Foundation and an adjunct professor of religion at Molloy College, and Pastor Kimberly Wilson of Bethlehem Lutheran Church will jointly lead a "Last Supper" Celebration.

A sampling of Passover foods will be served as well as coffee, tea, and dessert for all. The new liturgy is based on Passover rituals of Jesus' time but reflects modern Christian spirituality. This program was introduced last year by Rabbi David and Pastor Wilson and has been further developed for this year's celebration.

The impetus for this program is the growing interest in Christian communities to celebrate the Last Supper, the organizers said. In the past, churches wishing to do this would hold a traditional Jewish Seder using a Jewish Haggadah. Using a Haggadah to celebrate Jesus' Last Supper is historically inaccurate because the Haggadah as we know it was not developed until

many centuries later. Perhaps more importantly, according to Rabbi David and Rev. Wilson, usurpation of a Jewish religious ritual and liturgy for the fulfillment of Christian spiritual needs is religiously inappropriate and spiritually unsatisfying for Christians. The new liturgy borrows from the form of a Seder but expresses Christian religious values and rituals while honoring the Seder's Jewish roots.

This "Last Supper" celebration will be held exactly one week prior to Maundy Thursday, when according to Christian tradition, Jesus celebrated the Last Supper. While not intended as an ecumenical Seder, the celebration is open to participation by people of all faiths as a unique experience in learning about and honoring one another's faith traditions.

Reservations are necessary and may be made by calling Bethlehem Lutheran Church at 223-3400. The cost for the event is \$4 per person, maximum \$10 per family, and scholarships are available. Reservations will be accepted until March 30. For additional information, one may call Rabbi Jo David at (212) 249-0799 or Pastor Kimberly Wilson at (516) 223-3400.

als:

st

b
it
celand
list rank-
but just
including
why pub-
st, based
who take
Baldwin
however,
are taking
superinten-
week.
the top of
on comes
ast week's
an educa-
gton Post,
uggle" sur-
d at thou-
country to
e based on
if) list and

Church includes Passover rituals in celebration

On Thursday, April 2, from 7-9:30 p.m. at Bethlehem Lutheran Church, 1375 Grand Ave., Baldwin, Rabbi Jo David, Executive Director of the Jewish Appleseed Foundation and Adjunct Professor of Religion at Molloy College and Pastor Kimberly Wilson of Bethlehem Lutheran Church will jointly lead a "Last Supper" celebration. A sampling of Passover foods will be served as well as coffee, tea and dessert for all. The new liturgy is based on Passover rituals of Jesus' time but reflects modern Christian spirituality. This program was introduced last year by Rabbi David and Pastor Wilson and has been further developed for this year's celebration.

The cost for the event is \$4, with a maximum of \$10 per family, and scholarships are available. Bring a canned food item; the church will be donating food to the Interfaith Nutrition Network. Reservations are necessary, and will be accepted until March 30. For information, call Rabbi Jo David at 1-212-249-0799 or Pastor Kimberly Wilson at 223-3400.

Gulotta's Mobile Office to visit Baldwin on Friday

Nassau County Executive Thomas S. Gulotta's Mobile Office will be located at C-Town on Grand Avenue in Baldwin, on Friday, March 27th, from 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. The Mobile Office was created by the County Executive to provide residents with information about County government and expand the County's outreach program.

"A primary function of local government is to reach out and to make government available and responsive to our residents in all corners of the County," Gulotta said. "One means by which this can be achieved is to make available direct lines of communication with our citizenry. Our Mobile Office will allow our residents to receive information about the County and seek redress for their concerns in a location convenient to their homes. This is particularly helpful for the disabled or the elderly who may find transportation difficult." Gulotta said the Mobile Office would allow greater efficiency procedures, while "providing citizens with a greater voice in the decision making process of county government."

Very Special Seder / Liturgy reflects Christian spirituality

[NASSAU AND SUFFOLK Edition]

Newsday - Long Island, N.Y.

Author: By Stuart Vincent. STAFF WRITER

Date: Mar 27, 1997

Start Page: A.35

Section: NEWS

Document Text

When members of her congregation asked the Rev. Kimberly Wilson if they could hold a Passover seder to re-enact Jesus' Last Supper, she turned for help to a local rabbi.

Part of a growing trend among Christian congregations to recapture the Jewish roots of the Last Supper - believed by most scholars to have been a seder - the request nonetheless presented a problem for the pastor of Bethlehem Lutheran Church in Baldwin: how to create a meal that was consistent with the Passover tradition of Jesus' day while interpreting it so it could be understood by Christians who had not grown up with the seder tradition.

The solution was a special liturgy written by Wilson and Rabbi Jo David of Union Reform Temple in Freeport that uses the traditional seder format but reflects Christian spirituality. The traditional Passover seder is a telling of the story of the Jews' exodus from Egypt using various foods and wine as symbols, followed by a meal.

"We wrote a new liturgy. It really came out of our conversations," Wilson said of her meetings with David. "It's a Christian ritual experience and a learning experience for both Christians and Jews. We invited people of all faiths to participate as a learning experience."

More than 60 people from the church and the synagogue gathered for the meal last night on the eve of the Christian holiday marking the Last Supper, known as Holy Thursday or Maundy Thursday. The tables, decorated in Easter colors of purple and yellow, contained pitchers of grape juice rather than wine and seder plates containing the ritual foods such as bitter herbs and charoset, a mixture of fruit and nuts.

David said she was aware that other churches were holding seders, but wanted a different format.

"I've never felt comfortable with churches taking a traditional Jewish Haggadah {the book used at the Passover seder} and struggling through the Hebrew and trying to understand it but really not understanding," she said.

Besides, the Haggadah used in modern seders was written after Jesus' time, she said.

Instead, the two women took the "bare bones" of the seder - the story of the exodus, the unleavened bread and wine, the four questions - and reinterpreted the symbols "as a vehicle for a more satisfying Christian spiritual linking with the Last Supper," David said.

The four questions were reworded to fit into a Christian experience. In answer to the question, "Why is this night different from all other nights?" one of the answers was, "On this night we study the Jewish religious and historical components of the Last Supper and seek to incorporate these new insights into a deeper sense of Christian spiritual awareness."

The meal, held at the church, was open to members of both congregations and to the larger community.

"We felt it's important for people of both faiths to see how it's possible to be inspired by a particular religious tradition and to find a new spiritual path by using certain elements of that tradition rather than just to appropriate a whole tradition the way many churches are doing by saying, 'We're going to do a seder,' " David said.

Wilson said she hoped her congregation members "will have a richer understanding of the Jewish roots of Jesus' institution of the Last Supper" and will have learned that "we can be together and join together and still respect our differences and not co-opt other religious practices, but learn from one another.

"One of the steps for peacemaking is to celebrate together."

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction or distribution is prohibited without permission.

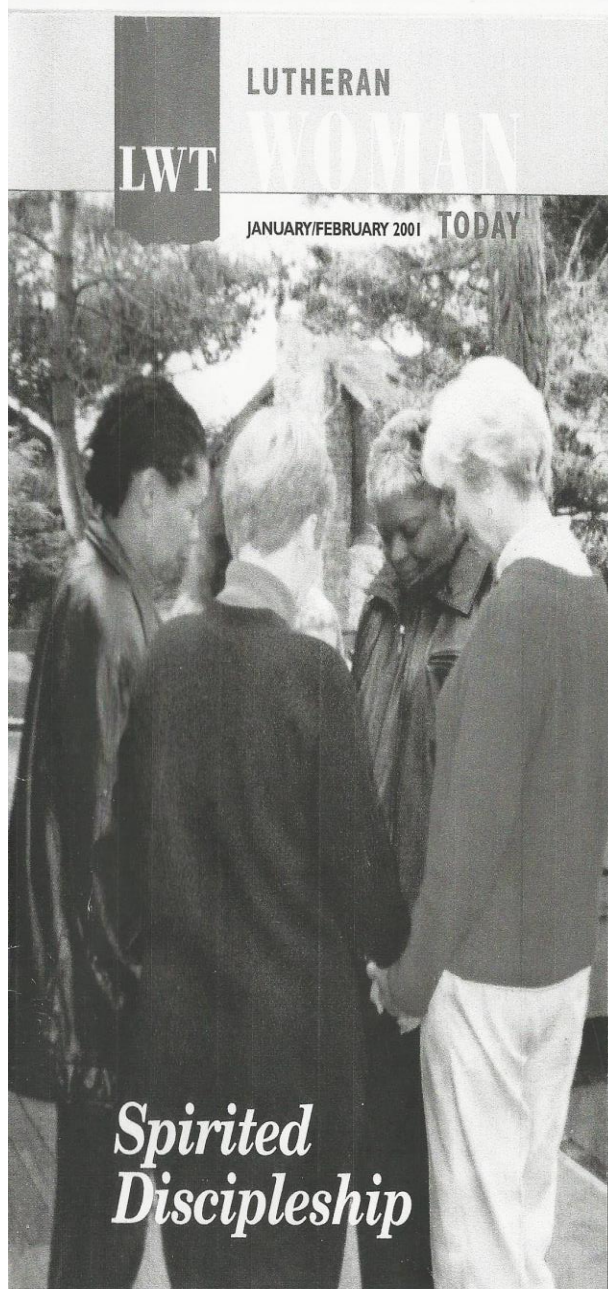
Abstract (Document Summary)

When members of her congregation asked the Rev. Kimberly Wilson if they could hold a Passover seder to re-enact Jesus' Last Supper, she turned for help to a local rabbi.

Part of a growing trend among Christian congregations to recapture the Jewish roots of the Last Supper - believed by most scholars to have been a seder - the request nonetheless presented a problem for the pastor of Bethlehem Lutheran Church in Baldwin: how to create a meal that was consistent with the Passover tradition of Jesus' day while interpreting it so it could be understood by Christians who had not grown up with the seder tradition.

The solution was a special liturgy written by Wilson and Rabbi Jo David of Union Reform Temple in Freeport that uses the traditional seder format but reflects Christian spirituality. The traditional Passover seder is a telling of the story of the Jews' exodus from Egypt using various foods and wine as symbols, followed by a meal.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction or distribution is prohibited without permission.



A transformed heart

by Kimberly A. Wilson



Not long after I was installed as pastor of Bethlehem Lutheran Church, the Christian education committee came to me with a request to hold a Passover celebration. Like many churches, the people of Bethlehem wanted to celebrate Jesus' Last Supper in the context of the Jewish seder ritual.

I wanted to honor my congregation's wish to learn more about the Jewish roots of Jesus' institution of the Lord's Supper, but I also knew that celebrating the Jewish holiday of Passover without respecting the integrity and development of Jewish tradition apart from Christianity would be problematic. Not only would such a celebration be religiously inaccurate, it would almost certainly be spiritually offensive to our Jewish neighbors and friends.

Knowing that I was treading on rocky religious ground, I turned for help to my friend and colleague Rabbi Jo David, the spiritual leader of Union Reform Temple, a nearby Long Island synagogue. Rabbi David was happy to help me and my congregation sort out the issues and even co-plan and co-lead an appropriate celebration.

The challenge for us was to create a ritual consistent with the Passover tradition of Jesus' day while interpreting it so that it would be understood by Christians who had not grown up with the seder tradition. Our solution was to write a new liturgy, a Christian ritual experience and a learning experience for both Christians and Jews. This liturgy came out of our conversations as Rabbi David and I shared our diverse faith traditions as women in ministry.

The finished product, titled "A Last Supper Celebration," is not designed to be an interfaith seder (although those are valid experiences). Instead, our liturgy borrows from the form of a seder and expresses

January/February 2001

21

Christian religious values and rituals while honoring the seder's Jewish roots. We took the basic framework of the seder—the story of the Exodus, the four cups, the unleavened bread—and reinterpreted them, in Rabbi David's words, as a “vehicle for a more satisfying Christian spiritual linking with the Last Supper.” We invited people of all faiths to this learning experience.

The response was overwhelmingly positive. Paradoxically, by respectfully affirming and even celebrating our differences as people of faith, we grew closer together. Martha Meyer of Bethlehem observed, “Rabbi David explained the Jewish traditions and Pastor Wilson discussed the relevance they had to our lives as Christians. The whole experience gave you a feeling of real closeness.”

Our purposes in creating a new liturgy were simple but rich with ecumenical implications. In an interview in *Newsday*, Rabbi David explained, “We felt it's important for people of both faiths to see how it's possible to be inspired by a particular religious tradition and to find a new spiritual path by using certain elements of that tradition rather than just to appropriate a whole tradition the way some churches are doing by saying, ‘We're going to do a seder.’”

For my part as a Christian pastor, I had hoped that all those who participated would have a richer understanding of the Jewish roots of Jesus' institution of the Last Supper. Even more, I had hoped they would have learned that as Christian and Jewish people of faith, we can be together and still respect our differences, and not co-opt other religious practices but learn from one another.

Rabbi David explained the religious and historical inaccuracies inherent in many Christian celebrations of the Passover ritual.

“Many Christian religious leaders don't understand that when they perform a seder for a Christian community by reading from the traditional Jewish *Haggadah*, this is not a re-creation of the Last Supper. Much of the *Haggadah* and the Passover seder ritual as celebrated



today was developed long after Jesus' lifetime. The Passover seder of Jesus' time was a much simpler ritual.”

In contrast, our liturgy was based on the Last Supper ritual described in the New Testament. We also relied on the descriptions of the Jewish seder ritual found in the *Mishna*, a Jewish text that contains material reflecting Jewish traditions that were observed during Jesus' time.

Using these texts as a guide, we retained the basic elements of the seder but reinterpreted them to better meet the spiritual needs and sensitivities of modern Christians. For example, the four cups—one of the foundational elements of the seder and traditionally related to four biblical verses about redemption—were dedicated to four people who had helped liberate others, such as Dietrich Bonhoeffer and Rosa Parks. The four questions—another building block of the seder that helps to explain the reasons for the seder ritual—were reinterpreted to fit the purpose of the evening.

The first of the four questions in a traditional seder asks, “Why is this night different from all other nights?” The traditional answer refers to the eating of matzah, unleavened bread, all during the holiday of Passover. In our liturgy we responded, “On all other nights, we tell stories in the voices of the past, or speak of matters of concern in the present. On this night, we blend ancient and modern words and stories. We study the Jewish religious and historical components of the Last Supper and seek to incorporate these new insights into a deeper sense of Christian spiritual awareness.”

Simple rituals such as hand-washing meant a great deal to those who attended. Rabbi David explained the meaning of hand-washing at a traditional seder. I explained that at Jesus' Last Supper, Jesus washed the feet rather than the hands of his disciples. We invited each person to wash the hands of their neighbor at the table, with the pitcher and bowl provided, remembering Jesus' example of servanthood. Jesus said that the greatest among you should be like the least, and the one who rules as the one who serves (Luke 22:26). Together, we sang “Jesu, Jesu,” an African hymn about loving and serving one's neighbors. Dorothy Becker, the current church council president of Bethlehem, watched a woman tenderly and thoroughly wash the hands of the woman sitting next to her and commented, “It brought tears to my eyes. It was so beautiful.”

SUGGESTIONS FOR CREATING YOUR OWN LAST SUPPER CELEBRATION

1. Request assistance from a local Rabbi. Jewish clergy are often happy to provide guidance on celebrations that are both respectful and appropriate. When in doubt, ask!
2. Celebrate difference! Minimizing or ignoring real differences between faith traditions is likely to cause offense. We can be different and still come together.
3. Invite the community to participate. Be sure to include youth!
4. Rabbi Jo David and Rev. Kimberly A. Wilson are working on a book containing their "Last Supper Celebration." If you would like to obtain a copy when it is available, contact the Rev. Kimberly A. Wilson at Bethlehem Lutheran Church, 1375 Grand Ave., Baldwin, NY 11510, or via email at WilsonKimA@aol.com



Rabbi Jo David and Reverend Kimberly A. Wilson in Baldwin before the Jewish-Christian seder ritual.

Debbie Hoover, the mother of three teens who attended the Last Supper celebration, commented to a reporter from *Jewish Week*, "None of us had ever been to a seder before, so we weren't sure what to expect, but Rabbi David and Pastor Wilson made it interesting and clear. The kids liked the 10 plagues the best and they loved the desserts, even though they had a little trouble with the bitter herbs!" A member of Union Reform Temple affirmed in the same article, saying, "Seeing the seder from both sides was fascinating, especially the way they correlated the traditions. It was definitely done in a way where both Jews and Christians could learn from each other with neither side being offended."

There were a few problems along the way, however. Bethlehem's cooking committee was especially nervous about the food, since they were

unfamiliar with the recipes. Rabbi David laughed when she got an emergency beep several nights before the celebration asking why the eggs we were roasting in the oven kept exploding. Roasted eggs are not a traditional Easter dish! We laughed together even as we learned, and the food was delicious. A special treat was the charoset, a mixture of apples, wine, and nuts, made as a reminder of the bricks and mortar the Israelites built with in Egypt.

We ended our Last Supper celebration with the Aaronic benediction, in English and in Hebrew, which comes from the book of Numbers (6:24-26) and is part of both Jewish and Christian liturgies. In Hebrew, this prayer is called the "Birkat Kohanim," the Priestly Blessing. Then we said the following statement of completion in unison: "We came together tonight not knowing where this journey would lead us. We pray that God will be with each of us on our separate paths. Until we meet again, may the grace of God go with us." Psalm 133:1 helped frame this first Last Supper celebration and all the others that follow it:

"May all people dwell together in peace." ■

Kimberly A. Wilson is the pastor of Bethlehem Lutheran in Baldwin, Long Island, N.Y.

Leaders' Outline

LAST SUPPER CELEBRATION OUTLINE

Thursday, April 2, 1998

1. K- Greeting, not meant as an interfaith seder, but as Christian ritual experience relating to the Jewish origins of the Last Supper and connect to modern Christian spirituality. Intro JD and explain role as interpreter of Jewish foundation for this ritual.
2. J – simple overview of the seder. What the Hebrew word means, why Jews celebrate it. Background of the haggadah, the seder in the time of Jesus – difference from today. Why a traditional seder not “the last supper.” Why Jewish seder not appropriate Christian ritual.
3. M – intro first song in hymnals - #724 -**Shalom Song – sing 2x in English and 2x in Hebrew**
4. J – intro candle lighting – explain in Jewish tradition, meaning of candle lighting in general, for holy days in particular.
5. K – **candle lighting**. Explain purple candles. Instruct someone at each table to light.
6. K - Lead group reading of candle lighting blessing.
7. J – intro the Four Cups of Witness. Explain why fruit of the vine. In Jewish seder – each cup linked to a different Biblical verse. Discuss verses from Ex.6:6-7. In this new liturgy, each cup dedicated to a person whose actions remind us of the Biblical verses or to a spiritual ideal.
8. K – introduce the first Cup of Holiness – dedicated to a hero of the Holocaust. choose someone to read the bio.
9. Bio of first Witness is read.
10. Fill cups with juice
11. K – lead community in prayer over grape juice and drink.
12. M - intro song #689 – **Rejoice in God's Saints – verses 1,2,4**
13. J – Explain handwashing in seder – 2 x and why. Here only once.
14. K – choose someone to read liturgy for handwashing.
15. M – intro and lead Jesu, Jesu from Ghana #765 – **verses 1,2,3**

16. J – Explain meaning of parsley, salt water, dipping of parsley in salt water in Roman times – Jewish terms.
17. K – explain these symbols in terms of this celebration and leads reading of prayer in unison, as well as action of dipping parsley into salt water.
18. J – explain about matza, including Shmura matza what is matzah, why related to Passover – chametz in spiritual terms. Explain about the 3 matzot – cohen, levi and Israelite - tradition of breaking the middle matzah. Explain about the Afikomen.
19. K – chose someone to read about the breaking of the middle matzah tonight.
20. Liturgy is read.
21. K – have someone do reading for breaking of matzah.
22. K – break middle matza and set aside the afikomen.
23. J – explain story telling – it starts with four questions which reflect on seder – read traditional questions and explain. Explain why questions changed.- fall of the temple. Talk about having youngest child read/chant questions. Also, different questions different haggadahs – vegetarian, feminist, political.
24. K – select readers to read intro and four new questions
25. The questions are read.
26. J – discuss basic concept of story according to Jewish viewpoint – begins with degradation and ends with redemption through God's agency. Mention that in this telling the story goes further to incorporate the Last Supper.
27. K – choose first reader.
28. First segment is read.
29. M – intro and lead Go Down Moses - #670 – **verses 1,4,5**
30. K – choose reader for next section.
31. Next section is read.
32. J – lead group recitation of the plagues – part 1
33. K – choose reader for section between the plagues.

34. Explanation of modern plagues is read.
35. K – lead recitation of modern plagues.
36. K – choose readers for next three sections.
37. Next three sections are read.
38. M – intro and lead #684 - **Spirit, Spirit of Gentleness – verses 1, 2**
39. J – intro the second Cup – Cup of Intentional Living. Tell story about Andi.
40. J – direct to fill cup. Lead unison reading of prayer and drink.
41. J – introduce the seder plate. Discuss the art of the seder plate, ritual objects.
42. K – choose readers for the Seder plate reading.
43. Do readings about the seder plate.
44. J – explain blessing over matza as bread.
45. K – comment on matza in this ceremony and read liturgy.
46. K- lead blessing over the matza and eat matza..
47. J – Explain eating of matzah, charoset and bitter herb – Hillel sandwich and eat.
48. J – explain eating of hardboiled egg as a prelude to the meal. Eat egg.
49. Break for coffee – discussion/questions, thanks to organizers, workers etc.
50. K – introduce singing of Song of Grace. (Marcy, this will be done by someone else.
51. J – explain need to find and redeem afikomen in traditional Jewish seder. Children search for and find afikomen.
52. Children recite the liturgy of redemption as a group. (We give them eggs.) Distribute afikomen and eat.
53. M – intro singing of #752 – I, the Lord of Sea and Sky – verses 1,3
54. J - – intro to third cup – The Cup of Blessing. Tell Christopher Reeve story re Dayenu.

A Last Supper Celebration

Featuring a New Liturgy
Based on Traditional Jewish Sources



Thursday, April 2, 1998
at
Bethlehem Lutheran Church
Baldwin, New York

Presented by

Pastor Kimberly A. Wilson,
Bethlehem Lutheran Church

Rabbi Jo David, Executive Director
Jewish Appleseed Foundation, Inc.

Marcy Smith, Music Director

"LAST SUPPER" CELEBRATION

GREETINGS from Rabbi Jo David and Pastor Kim Wilson

BACKGROUND OF JEWISH SEDER

OPENING SONG: (WOV) #724 *Shalom Song*

Peace on
Earth



CANDLE LIGHTING

Introduction: For Jews, lighting candles begins a festival and reminds us of God's presence. For Christians, also, lit candles symbolize the presence of God in our midst. Christians believe that wherever two or three are gathered in God's name, God is there in the midst of them. We light candles for worship and we light them tonight for this "Last Supper" Celebration.

Candles on each table are lit.

Prayer: (in unison) **Almighty God, As these candles flicker and burn illuminating our celebration, may the experience that we share together kindle renewed passion in each of us to help build peace in our community and in our world. Amen.**

THE FOUR CUPS OF WITNESS

An explanation of the four seder cups is given. God makes four promises to Israel in Exodus 6:6-7. The promises are: 1) I will bring you out from under the burdens of Mitzrayim; 2) I will deliver you from their service; 3) I will redeem you with an outstretched arm and great judgments; and 4) I will take you to Me for a people and I will become God for you. Traditionally, each cup represents one of these promises.

THE FIRST CUP: The Cup of Holiness Dedicated to a Hero of the Holocaust

Marguerite Mulder was born in Groningen, a farming town in northern Holland to a Christian family. Her brother Dirk was shot and killed by a soldier in 1944 because he was mentally retarded and didn't understand the command to halt. The Mulder family considered Hitler a murderer and sheltered a total of sixteen Jews in their home throughout the war years. When asked why she and her parents risked their lives in this way to save innocent lives, she replied that they asked the Lord to help them. The Mulder family received a medal from Vad Yashem for their actions as rescuers. Marguerite comments, "It was a terrible time, but a wonderfully human time, too. I have no regrets. I would do it again, just the same."

The first cup is filled with juice.

Blessing of the First Cup: (in unison) **Blessed are You, Lord our God, Creator of the Universe. You created the fruit of the vine. Bless this cup that we drink and bless us also that we may love and serve You and our neighbors. Amen.**

Guests drink the first cup.

SING (WOV) #689 *Rejoice in God's Saints*

HAND WASHING

An explanation of hand washing in the traditional seder is given.

Hand Washing in the Context of the Last Supper Celebration: In some Christian traditions, the washing of hands still takes place in the Communion Service. The rite is called "lavabo" from the Latin meaning "washing." On the evening of the Last Supper, however, Jesus washed the feet rather than the hands of the disciples as a sign of their commission for the sacred tasks ahead of them. (John 22:24-27) Jesus said, "The greatest among you should be like the least, and the one who rules as the one who serves." (Luke 22:26) As we wash our hands this evening, we remember Jesus' example of servanthood.

SINGING OF THE SERVANT SONG (WOV) #765 *Jesu, Jesu* (From Ghana)

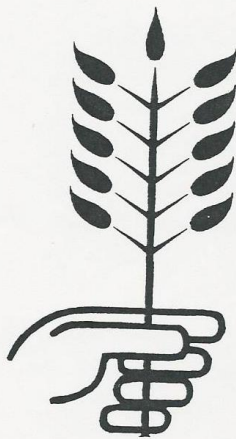
Using the pitcher and bowl provided at each table, take turns pouring a small amount of water over the hands of the person next to you and dry with a towel.

GROWTH AND NEW LIFE

An explanation of the ritual action of dipping the parsley into salt water is given for both the traditional seder and this evening's celebration.

Prayer: (in unison) Gracious God, You are the source of new life and the hope of all creation. Grant that we may be messengers of hope and renewal in our daily lives. Amen.

Following the prayer, we dip parsley into salt water and eat it.



MATZAH AND THE BREAKING OF THE MIDDLE MATZAH/ HIDING THE AFIKOMEN

An explanation of the three matzot and the breaking of the middle matzah in the traditional seder is given. Then, the following explanation of the meaning of this action for this evening's celebration is read.

Reader: Tonight as we break the Matzoh and hide the afikomen, we remember that Jesus told the parable of the Lost Sheep in which the Good Shepherd searches for and finds the one sheep which was lost. When our community is broken, God comes to search out the ones who are alienated and restore our unity. Jesus reflected Rabbinical tradition when he taught, "There will be more rejoicing in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous people who have no need to repent." (Luke 15:7) In a real way, our celebration is not fulfilled and our community is not complete until that which is lost is found.

The afikomen is hidden.



TELLING THE STORY

We tell our story in many different ways.

The Four Questions

Reader One: Why is this night different from all other nights?

Reader Two: On all other nights, we recite words of holiness steeped in tradition.

Community: On this night, we celebrate a new liturgy.

Reader Three: On all other nights, we tell stories in the voices of the past, or speak of matters of concern in the present.

Community: On this night, we blend ancient and modern words and stories.

Reader Four: On all other nights, we expect our religious institutions to make us feel spiritual.

Community: On this night, we take responsibility for our own spiritual seeking.

Reader Five: On all other nights, Jewish rituals are not part of our spiritual life.

Community: On this night, we study the Jewish religious and historical components of the Last Supper and seek to incorporate these new insights into a deeper sense of Christian spiritual awareness.

Reader:

Our story begins in Egypt with Moses and the children of Israel. The Israelites were slaves to Pharaoh. They toiled under terrible conditions, building storehouses to hold the Pharaoh's wealth. The Israelites cried out to God for help. God heard their cries of distress and told Moses to go to Pharaoh and tell Pharaoh to let the Israelites go free. But Pharaoh refused Moses' request. God sent 10 plagues against Pharaoh before Pharaoh finally agreed to free the Israelites.

SING (WOV) #670 *Go Down Moses*

Reader:

Many Egyptians suffered and died because of the plagues. Although we rejoice that the Israelites were finally freed from slavery, we mourn for those who suffered and died. There is a Jewish tradition that each person should feel as though he or she was personally freed from Egypt. To demonstrate that personal sense of freedom, and the personal concern for the Egyptians who suffered, we remove ten drops of sweetness from our cups as we recite the catalogue of the plagues:

Community:

1. The Nile turned blood red.
2. Frogs overran the banks of all bodies of water and invaded the land.
3. Lice infested all living creatures.
4. Swarms of insects flew across the land, stinging and biting all living things.
5. All the cattle died of a mysterious disease.
6. People mysteriously broke out in boils.
7. Hail as big as baseballs fell over the land.
8. Locusts swarmed over the land, devouring all the crops.
9. Darkness descended over the land, so that one could not tell day from night.
10. Death came to all the first-born of Egypt.

Reader:

There are also plagues that afflict our world today. We remove another ten drops of sweetness as we recite ten plagues that affect us and the times in which we live.

Community:

1. Lack of faith and spiritual commitment
2. Religious intolerance
3. Lack of support for our houses of worship and religious institutions
4. Judging others according to age, sex, appearance, religion, race or national origin
5. Unkindness toward our loved ones
6. Acceptance of violence and negative messages in the media
7. Lack of appropriate concern for our own needs and feelings
8. Callous disregard for the feelings of others
9. Gossip and indiscriminate storytelling
10. Lack of responsibility for personal political and social action

Reader:

God took the Israelites out of the land of Egypt, brought them to Mount Sinai, gave them the Torah to guide their lives, brought them into the land of Canaan and blessed them with the settlement of the land and the establishment of the holy Temple. God sent the Israelites messengers of God's word, the prophets, who helped guide and comfort the people through a thousand years of struggle and triumph.

Reader:

In about the year 1 C.E., a baby was born to Mary and Joseph, two Jews, in a stable in the town of Bethlehem. Jesus grew and became strong, increasing in wisdom and the grace of God was upon him. He taught people about God, healed those who were sick, and many became his disciples and followed him.

Reader:

Just before Jesus' death on the cross, he went up to Jerusalem with his disciples to celebrate the Passover. In the Upper Room, he celebrated the Last Supper with his disciples. While they were eating, Jesus took the bread, and after blessing it, he broke it, gave it to the disciples, and said, "Take and eat; this is my body." Then he took the cup and after giving thanks, he gave it to them saying, "Drink from it all of you; for this is my blood of the new covenant, which is poured out for all people for the forgiveness of sins." After Jesus' celebrated the Last Supper with his disciples, he was crucified, died, and on the third day, God raised him from the dead. Christians celebrate Jesus' resurrection on Easter Sunday.

SING (WOV) #684 *Spirit, Spirit of Gentleness*

THE SECOND CUP: THE CUP OF INTENTIONAL LIVING

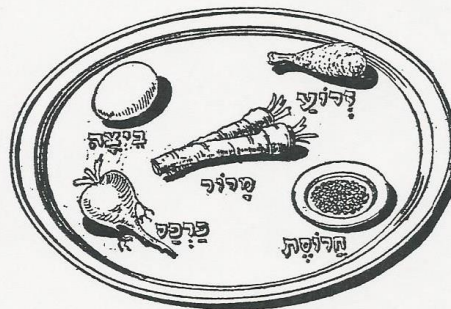
Jesus taught that everything we have is God's gift. Each day of our lives is a gift to us from God and how we use that gift is our thank-you to God. Rabbi David shares a personal story.

The second cup is filled.

Blessing of the Second Cup: *(in unison)* Blessed are You, the Great "I Am" of the Universe. Through Your goodness, You have blessed us with the gift of life itself. We offer ourselves to Your service and dedicate our lives to the care and redemption of all that You have made. Amen.

UNDERSTANDING THE FOODS ON THE SEDER PLATE

THE SEDER PLATE



UNDERSTANDING THE MEANING OF THE ITEMS ON THE SEDER PLATE

Community: What is the meaning of the Parsley?

Reader: In the Jewish tradition, the parsley is a reminder of the spring and miracle of renewal. For Christians, the parsley is a symbol of new life.

Community: What is the meaning of the Charoset?

Reader: In the Jewish tradition, the chunky texture of the charoset is a reminder of the bricks and mortar the Israelites used to build the storehouses of the Pharaoh.

For Christians, the charoset may remind Christians of the complexity of Jesus' experience as he approached the cross. His agony and his joy in fulfilling God's plan were intermingled.

Community: What is the meaning of the Bitter Herb?

Reader: In the Jewish tradition, the bitter herb, which is usually horseradish, is a reminder of the bitterness of slavery the Israelites experienced under the yoke of the Egyptians. For Christians, the horseradish is a reminder of all those who suffer in the world. We understand that we are called to a life of service to help relieve that suffering.

Community: What is the meaning of the Green Vegetable?

Reader: In the Jewish tradition, the green vegetable, usually celery or romaine lettuce, is a reminder of God's goodness to us in feeding us through the fertility of the earth.

For Christians, the green vegetable is a reminder of our duty to be good stewards of the earth, so that it will continue to provide for us.

Community: What is the meaning of the Roasted Egg?

Reader: In the Jewish tradition, the roasted egg is a symbol of the special festival offering that was brought to the Temple in the city of Jerusalem.

For Christians, the roasted egg is a reminder of the Easter egg, a symbol of new life and resurrection.

Community: What is the meaning of the orange?

Reader: Traditionally, an orange is not included on the Seder plate. In more recent times, it was added to remind ourselves that God loves all of us even those we have sometimes excluded because of bias and bigotry.

Community: What is the meaning of the Roasted Lamb Shankbone?

Reader: In the Jewish tradition, the roasted lamb shankbone is a reminder of the Paschal offering that was brought to the Temple in celebration of the Passover ritual. The Temple was destroyed in 70 C.E. by the Romans. Its loss is still recalled with bitterness and regret by many Jews. For this reason, it is a tradition not to point to the bone.

For Christians, the lamb shankbone is a reminder that when John saw Jesus coming to him, John said, "Behold the Lamb of God which takes away the sin of the world." (John 1:29). It also reminds us that Jesus lived during the time when the paschal sacrifice was still being made in the Temple in Jerusalem.

THE MATZAH

Rabbi David introduces the Jewish tradition of blessing over matzah.

Pastor Wilson shares the significance of this for Jesus' celebration of the Last Supper.

In Biblical days, bread was the center of every meal. To invite a stranger to share the bread of the household was and is the greatest sign of hospitality. Breaking bread together is the standard method of establishing ties of kinship. Our English word "companion" literally means "one who shares bread." The matzah that we eat tonight is the very same kind of bread Jesus would have blessed and broken at the Last Supper, "Now as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed and broke it and gave it to the disciples and said, 'Take, eat, for this is my body.'" (Matthew 26:26)

We bless the matzah.

Blessing over matzah: Blessed are You, Lord our God, Creator of the Universe. Bless this gift of bread and bless our community this evening as we come together in joy and celebration. We praise You for You are the source of our life. Amen.

We eat charoset, matzah, and bitter herb together.

Rabbi David explains the meaning of this Hillel sandwich.

SINGING A SONG OF GRACE

(Mrs. Betty Timmes leads us in a song of grace.)

**All praise to Thee, My God this night,
And for the blessings of the light,
For strength and health and daily food,
And all that makes our life so good. Amen.**

SAMPLING OF PASSOVER FOODS (Break for food and fellowship.)

REDEMPTION OF THE AFIKOMEN

Young people find and return that which was lost.

We say the following for the purpose of redeeming the afikommen.

Youth: **We searched for that which was lost and we have found it.**

All in Unison: **We rejoice when the lost in our communities are found by God's love.**

SONG CELEBRATING GOD'S REDEMPITIVE LOVE

We sing (WOV) #752

I, the Lord of Sea and Sky



Psalms 133:1

Translation of Hebrew Text:
"May all people dwell together in peace!"

THE THIRD CUP: The Cup of Blessing

Our lives are blessed by the witness of those men, women, and children who transcend physical and/or mental challenges. Their courage in living offers us a model of wisdom and strength. We honor those among us who are differently-abled. They inspire and bless us by their example. Rabbi David shares how Christopher Reeve has inspired her in her own spiritual journey.

The third cup is filled.

Blessing of the Third Cup: *(in unison)* **Blessed are You, Lord our God, Creator of the Universe. Your love supports us in times of need. Help us to value each person as a gift from You. Amen.**

We drink the third cup.

WELCOMING OUR NEIGHBORS

Rabbi David explains the ancient tradition of opening the door for Elijah.

We fill the large cup for Elijah and for all those who are not at our table.

Pastor Wilson explains that tonight in opening the door, we symbolically open our doors to all those who are hungry for food or for friendship in our community. We bring our offering of food and place it on the table to share with those in need. Donated food will be taken to the Interfaith Nutrition Network for distribution in their food ministry. We return to our seats.

All stand. Lights are lowered.

We open the door.

Jesus taught, "Love your neighbor as you love yourself." Rabbi David explains that even as we care for our neighbors, we also take time to tell God what we need for ourselves. One person picks up the large cup in the center of the table. As we pass the cup around the table, each person whispers their own prayer to God for a need in his or her own life. The last person replaces the cup on the table.

SHARING OF THE PEACE

We exchange a sign of God's peace with one another saying, "The Peace of the Lord be with you." and "Shalom."

We sing "Sim Shalom, Dona Nobis." (Attached)

12

SIM SHALOM/DONA NOBIS PACEM

This Latin round, written in the Renaissance by Palestrina, repeats over and over the same words: "Give us peace." Both the Hebrew and Latin renditions may be sung as a 3 part round. Chords are intentionally not provided. This song sounds best a cappella.

Round
Gracefully

Lyrics: Liturgy
Music: Palestrina

I

Sim Do - na sha - lom bis to - va uv - ra - cha pacem

sim do - na sha - lom no - bis pa - ra - cha cem

II

to - va do - na to - va uv - ra - cha no - bis pa - cem

sha - lom do - na to - va no - bis to - va uv - ra - cha cem

III

sha - lom don - na to - va uv - ra - cha no - bis pa - cem

sha - lom do - na to - va no - bis to - va uv - ra - cha cem

Sim shalom tova uvracha.

שים שלום טובה וברכה

Bring to us peace, goodness, and a blessing.



THE FOURTH CUP: The Cup of Redemption Dedicated to Rosa Parks

As we approach the end of this century, we pause to reflect upon all those men and women who stepped into the unknown with new ideas and ways of relating. This cup represents people who do new things, those whose vision transcends their time. Though often misunderstood and even persecuted, their courage and creative vision are redemptive elements in our world. In her historic refusal to give up her seat on a bus for a white person in Alabama, Rosa Parks is a wonderful example of just such a witness and visionary. Her action led to the Montgomery Bus Boycott which helped fuel the Civil Rights Movement and eventually made such discriminatory laws and practices against any person illegal.

The fourth cup is filled.

Blessing of the Fourth Cup: *(in unison)* **Blessed are You, Lord our God, Creator of the Universe. We give You thanks for all those who have made their lives an expression of Your redemptive love. Bless this cup that we drink and bless us also that we may love and serve You and our neighbors. Amen.**

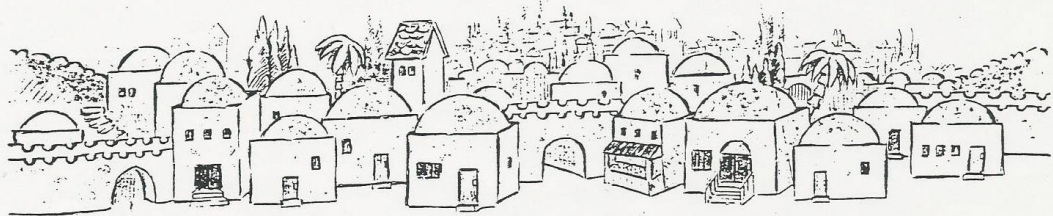
We drink the fourth cup.

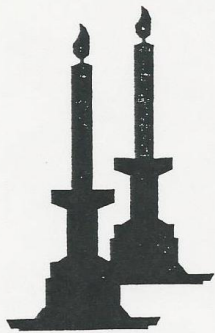
LOOKING TOWARD JERUSALEM

Rabbi David explains the traditional focus on Jerusalem at the conclusion of a Seder meal.

Pastor Wilson reflects on looking toward Jerusalem from a Christian perspective.

We sing, "Jerusalem, My Happy Home." (attached)





Jerusalem, My Happy Home

331

F B⁷ F C Dm C C⁷ F Am

1 Je - ru - sa - lem, my hap - py home, When shall I come to thee?
2 O hap - py har - bor of the saints, O sweet and pleas - ant soil!
3 Thy gar - dens and thy gal - lant walks Con - tin - ual - ly are green;
4 There trees for - ev - er - more bear fruit And ev - er - more do spring:

Dm C Dm Am B⁷ F C⁹ C⁷ F sus4 F

When shall my sor - rows have an end? Thy joys when shall I see?
In thee no sor - row may be found, No grief, no care, no toil.
There grow such sweet and pleas - ant flow'rs As no - where else are seen.
There ev - er - more the an - gels sit And ev - er - more do sing.

- 5 Jerusalem, my happy home,
Would God I were in thee!
Would God my woes were at an end,
Thy joys that I might see!

Text: F.B.P., 16th cent.
Tune: American

LAND OF REST
CM

15.

PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

We join together in prayer.

(In unison) We give thanks to the One who blesses by bringing us to this special time in our lives and who has made it possible for us to participate in this ritual of learning, spirit, and faith. Amen.

STATEMENT OF COMPLETION

(In unison) We came together tonight not knowing where this journey would lead us. We pray God will be with each of us on our separate paths. Until we meet again, may the grace of God go with us.

PRIESTLY BLESSING

The blessing from the book of Numbers is said in both Hebrew and English.

SONG OF LEAVE-TAKING

We sing, "Tefilat Haderech."



T'FILAT HADERECH

Lyrics based on traditional text:

Music & lyrics by Debbie Friedman
Arranged by Jody Silverberg

Gentle, flowing

[illegible]

A Tempo

men. *Ritardando* May we be shel-tered by the wings of peace, may

we be kept in safe-ty and in love----- may grace and com-pass-ion find their

way to ev-ery soul, may this be our bless-ing, a - men. A - men,

a - men, may this be our bless-ing, a - men----- A - men,

46

18

Handwritten musical score for a hymn. The score is written on two staves. The top staff has a treble clef and the bottom staff has a bass clef. The key signature is one flat (B-flat). The tempo is marked *Ritardando*. The lyrics are: "a - men, may this be our bless-ing, a - men". The chords are: E7, Am, F, G, C, C', Fm, C. The fingerings are: 1 2 5, 3 1 2 3 1 4 2 1 5.

May we be blessed as we go on our way,
 May we be guided in peace,
 May we be blessed with health and joy,
 May this be our blessing, Amen.

May we be sheltered by the wings of peace,
 May we be kept in safety and in love,
 May grace and compassion find their way to every soul,
 May this be our blessing, Amen.

© Rabbi So David + Pastor Kimberly Wilson 1997

47

19

TOTAL P. 84

Handout for Woodbury Union Church, Presbyterian, Warwick, Rhode Island

A Last Supper Seder

A Liturgical Haggadah for Christian Churches

Introduction

“Why is this night different from all other nights?” (Traditional Passover Liturgy)

Why is this night different from other nights? Every year, on Maundy Thursday, we gather in our sanctuary to mark Jesus’ last meal with his disciples, the meal that took place in an Upper Room before his betrayal, arrest, trial and execution. This year, while remembering the new covenant (‘Mandatum Novum’) that Jesus gave as he broke bread and shared the cup, we will be marking Holy Thursday in a new way. You are invited to experience a different kind of liturgy – a Last Supper Seder . This is a re-thinking of the traditional Jewish Passover Seder and its relationship to the Last Supper.

What is Passover?

Passover is a springtime holiday described in the Book of Exodus.* Originally, Passover was a celebration of the spring barley harvest in Israel. Later on, it became associated with the exodus of the Israelites from Egypt. Passover is a seven day holiday in Israel, as mandated by the Book of Exodus, but is celebrated for eight days everywhere else. Passover is one of the most important holidays in the Jewish calendar.

There are many special rules of conduct associated with Passover. The most important rule is that Jews may not own or eat any products made of wheat, barley, rye, spelt, or oats during the holiday. This includes not only baked goods, but pasta, beer, and whiskey. Outside of Israel, a Seder is held on the first two nights of Passover.

Passover is a home-based ritual, and has the highest observance of any festival in the Jewish year. While there are also special worship services offered in Jewish synagogues (Jewish houses of worship) during the holiday period, the home-based Seder is the highpoint of the holiday.

Passover often falls at about the same time as Holy Week, as it does this year. This year, the first Seder falls Monday evening, March 29.

* Exodus 12:1-28

What is a Seder?

The word “Seder” is based on the Hebrew verb that means “order” – as in “an order or proper sequence” of a series of rituals. A Passover Seder is a ritual that has a

very specific order. During the Seder, the story of the Israelites' journey from slavery in Egypt to freedom is recounted. Some scholars believe that the Last Supper was a Seder, while others believe that the Last Supper took place on the night before the beginning of Passover.

All Jewish festivals begin in the evening. The Passover Seder takes place around a table, usually in a home, but sometimes in a synagogue or community center. There are various rituals, a special liturgy contained in a book called an "haggadah" (from the Hebrew word for "telling," because a story is being told), and a dinner with foods especially associated with Passover.

What does the Passover Seder have to do with Jesus?

Jesus was Jewish, and was a rabbi. His work in first century Judea, like the work of all rabbis from ancient times to today, was to bring Jews closer to the authentic roots of their faith. When Jesus and his disciples entered Jerusalem for the last time, it was close to the time of Passover. There are many references throughout the New Testament that suggest that the Last Supper was a Passover Seder. Although some scholars disagree about whether the Last Supper took place on the night before the first Seder, or on the night of the first Seder itself, the ritual of the bread and the wine is suggestive of actions that take place in a Passover Seder.

Is the Jewish Passover Seder that is celebrated today the same as the Last Supper?

We don't know exactly how Jews celebrated Passover at the time of Jesus. We assume that the directions given to the Israelites in Numbers 9:11, which mandate eating unleavened bread with the Passover sacrifice and bitter herbs were observed, as well as participation in the Pascal sacrifice that was performed in the Temple in Jerusalem.

At home, there may have been some sort of discussion about the meaning of the holiday. We know that there were Four Questions that might have been asked, since we have a record of the questions that were asked while the Temple was still in operation. There are also four specific Biblical verses* that form the basis of a section of the Seder known as "The Four Sons" because these verses instruct a parent in how to teach a son about the meaning of Passover. These questions may have been asked as well, but we can't be sure because we don't have a written haggadah from this era.

What we can be certain about is that the Jewish Passover Seder that is celebrated today is very different from the Last Supper. The modern Haggadah, the book which is used for leading the Passover Seder, contains almost two thousand years of readings, rituals and prayers, most of which were unknown in Jesus' time.

* Exodus 13:8; Exodus 13:14; Exodus 12:26-27; Deuteronomy 6:20-23.

Can someone who is not Jewish attend a Jewish Passover Seder?

Absolutely. Offering hospitality is an important element of the . However, someone who is not Jewish and is attending a Passover Seder should be aware that the liturgy is meant exclusively for people who are Jewish. The prayers, songs, and liturgy reflect Jewish law and Jewish spirituality.

The Last Supper took place on Maundy Thursday.

Is there a Passover Seder that Christians might celebrate during Holy Week?

The interest of churches to offer some sort of in commemoration of Maundy Thursday (Holy Thursday) was the genesis of this new Last Supper Seder. There have been many attempts to create a "Christian" Passover Seder by inserting Christian hymns or prayers in the name of Jesus into the Jewish framework. These efforts are not usually satisfying for Christians because the Jewish Seder reflects Jewish religious ideas and Jewish spirituality. This new Last Supper Seder and Haggadah was developed by Rabbi Jo David, assisted by a team of ministers and rabbis as a Doctor of Ministry project in conjunction with New York Theological Seminary. The purpose of this new ritual and liturgy is to give churches an appropriate liturgy and ritual for Maundy Thursday that will satisfy the spiritual needs of Christians to draw closer to the Last Supper while learning about its Passover roots.

The Last Supper Seder uses the broad outline of a Jewish Passover Seder as a framework for a completely new Christian ritual. Many of the Jewish Passover Seder rituals have been deleted because they are not appropriate to the goal of creating a Christian spiritual experience. Among these are the traditional first washing of hands without a prayer, and the singing of "Dayenu", (It Would Have Been Enough) which lists specific things like the Jewish Sabbath that the Lord gave to the Israelites.

The prayers that appear here have been written to respond to Christian spiritual needs. However, appropriate aspects of the Passover Seder, like the partaking of bitter

herbs and matzah, which are mandated in the Book of Numbers as part of the Passover celebration have been retained to provide “teaching moments” that will help participants understand the historical and scriptural background of the Last Supper.

What Will Happen During the Seder ?

The Seder will be facilitated by your minister/s and a rabbi. In addition, each participant will be asked to read from the haggadah that has been created for this event. We hope that you will also join in the group readings, the singing, performance of the various rituals, and the dinner, which is an important part of every Seder experience.

The Last Supper Seder, like the traditional Passover Seder, has two parts. The first part precedes the dinner. The second part follows the dinner. The most important thing is that you enjoy yourself.

of thinking and behaving that keep us from living the kind of life that would make us happy

Last Supper Seder Haggadah
Woodbury Union Church, Warwick, Rhode Island
We Begin

Leader - Words of Welcome

Rabbi/Leader

The festival of Passover commemorates God's freeing of the Israelites from slavery in Egypt and their covenant with God at Mt. Sinai. The focus of the Passover celebration is the Seder, a home-based ritual that has developed over a period of more than 3,000 years. The Jewish Seder is a ritual intended for people who are Jewish and has a liturgy that assumes that the celebrant is Jewish. The celebration of Passover by Jews today is very different from the way it was celebrated during the time of Jesus.

Leader

We know that Jesus was Jewish. During his life, he would have celebrated Passover many times. Christian scripture and belief links the Last Supper to the celebration of Passover. Scholars disagree as to whether the Last Supper was celebrated on the first night of Passover, or on the night prior to the first night of Passover.

Matthew 26 details the preparations for the Passover Seder undertaken by Jesus and his disciples. This information is also clearly described in Mark 14 and Luke 22 and alluded to in John 13. With such a strong scriptural basis, it is natural that Christians would be interested in knowing more about the Passover Seder and the Last Supper. This is how Matthew paints the scene.

Reader

On the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread, the disciples came to Jesus and asked, 'Where do you want us to make preparations for you to eat the Passover?' He replied, "Go into the city to a certain man and tell him, 'The Teacher says: My appointed time is near. I am going to celebrate the Passover with my disciples at your house.'" So the disciples did as Jesus had directed them and prepared the Passover. Matthew 26:17-19

Rabbi/Reader

Today we will celebrate a new ritual with very old roots. This Last Supper Seder is a ritual that melds the historical and Biblical roots of the Passover Seder with modern Christian spiritual connections to the Last Supper. We have blended elements of the traditional Jewish Seder with modern Christian theology, liturgy, prayers, and music so that the ritual will speak to modern Christians.

A book called the "Haggadah" is used to help the leader and the participants celebrate the Jewish Seder. The Hebrew word "haggadah," means "telling," or "story". Tonight we have a special Haggadah for our Last Supper Seder, which will make it possible for all of us to participate.

Reader

The Jewish Seder is based on the Greco/Roman Banquet, which was popular in the land of Israel in the first centuries of the Common Era. For the rabbis, the Greco/Roman Banquet was the ultimate symbol of the way in which free people enjoyed themselves. Although the Jews were living under Roman rule, Jews dreamt of a day when their Promised Land would be a true Jewish homeland under Jewish political control. Using the Greco/Roman Banquet as a model for the Seder was a way for Jews to say that they believed that their dream of political freedom in Israel would one day come true.

Reader

The Greco/Roman Banquet was highly ritualized. Diners reclined on couches for their meal. Appetizers of raw vegetables were served at the beginning of the meal. These were dipped into salted water or vinegar. Drinking, making toasts, singing, discussions and story telling were also part of the Roman Banquet. All these elements are found in the basic structure of the Passover Seder and in our Last Supper Seder.

Rabbi/Reader

There are five basic themes in the Jewish Seder :

1. An acknowledgment of God's redemptive power;
2. The right to freedom for all people;
3. The importance of acting on behalf of those in need;
4. The imperative for all people to work to bring healing to the world;
5. The belief in a time when the world will be at peace.

Leader

These themes come to us from our shared scriptural heritage – the Hebrew Bible, also known to Christians as the “Old Testament.” These universal themes are important to all people of faith and conscience. Tonight we celebrate these themes.

Rabbi/Reader

The Jewish Haggadah instructs participants to feel as though they themselves had participated in the Exodus from Egypt. As we begin our spiritual journey tonight, we pray that we may each feel this sense of direct experience and understanding.

Candle Lighting**Rabbi/Leader**

Every Jewish festival begins with the lighting of at least two candles. On Passover, candles are lit in the evening before the Seder begins. For Jews, the lighting of candles shows that sacred time has begun. The lit candles also symbolize god's presence in our midst. The association of fire and god's presence is an idea that Christians and Jews share.

A volunteer at each table lights the three candles that have been placed on each table.

Reader

Tonight we light three candles as we begin our Last Supper Seder . The first candle represents Judaism, the original source of the ritual we will perform tonight. The second candle represents Christianity, our sacred faith. The third candle represents the Last Supper Seder , this special ceremony that we will experience this evening.

Leader

Friends, let us pray:

Together

Almighty God, may these candles illuminate my heart and bring me nearer to you. May this Last Supper Seder kindle within me a renewed passion for doing your work in the world. Just as you led the ancient Israelites out of slavery to freedom, may you lead me away from those things that enslave me so that I may be free to serve you with a whole heart. Help me accept your teaching, “As I go forward, step by step, the way will be opened up for me.” Amen.

*Proverbs 4:12

Leader

As we begin this special evening, let us become a community by greeting one another, exchanging a sign of God’s peace by saying, “The peace of the Lord be with you,” or “Shalom,” which is the Hebrew word for peace and wholeness.

The leader begins this ritual. When it is concluded, the leader continues.

Introduction to the Four Cups of the Fruit of the Vine

Rabbi/Leader

Tonight we will share four cups of the fruit of the vine during our celebration. In the Jewish tradition, drinking wine or grape juice is an expression of joy. In a Jewish Seder, a phrase from Exodus 6:6-7 is linked to each cup. Each of these phrases relates to God’s agency in freeing the Israelites from slavery in Egypt.

Reader

Cup 1 - “I will **free** you from the labors of the Egyptians (Exodus 6:6)

Reader

Cup 2 – And **deliver you from their bondage.** (Exodus 6:6)

Reader

Cup 3 - I will **redeem** you with an outstretched arm and through extraordinary measures. (Exodus 6:6)

Reader

Cup 4 - I will **take you to be My people**, and I will be your God. (Exodus 6:7)

Leader

For our Last Supper Seder, we will dedicate each cup to a specific social, ethical, spiritual, or moral ideal. As we prepare to celebrate the Cup of Freedom, please add some wine or grape juice to your cup.

The first cup is filled with grape wine or juice.

The First Cup – The Cup of Freedom and New Beginnings

Leader

The Cup of Freedom is dedicated to the concept of New Beginnings.

Reader

We live in a country where the freedom to practice one’s religion is a sacred right, not a privilege to be granted by a ruler’s whim. In Jerusalem, at the time of the Last

Supper, religious freedom did not exist. Religious leaders like Jesus were seen as dangerous people who wished to overthrow Roman rule. Throughout history, many people who were fighters for freedom and justice were killed by those who wished to maintain their power and authority.

Reader

Today, as we celebrate this Last Supper Seder, we turn our thoughts to the concept of new beginnings. New beginnings require a recommitment to our highest values and most sacred ideals; we honor our past, we acknowledge our present, we look forward with hope and faith to the future.

Reader

God promised the Israelites: ““I will **free** you from the labors of the Egyptians.”*

*Exodus 6:6

Together

We give thanks for the gift of religious freedom.

Reader

When Jesus began his Last Supper, he offered a cup to his disciples and said to them, “Take this, all of you, and drink from it.”*

*Luke 22:17

Together

We give thanks for the freedom to examine our religious traditions and for finding new ways to embrace our heritage and religious teachings.

Leader

Let us pray together. Please stand and raise your cup.

All rise and raise their cups of wine/juice.

Together

We give thanks to You, Creator of all things, for the fruit of the vine. In Your infinite wisdom, You have graced us with religious freedom, and with the privilege of fully exploring our religious traditions. May we be blessed to embrace these gifts, and to use them to join with You in bringing healing and peace to the world. Amen.

All drink, and are then seated.

Leader:

Let us sing together.

See back of book for lyrics – Song for the First Cup.

Together - Song

The Parsley and its Symbolism

Rabbi/Leader

At a traditional Jewish Seder, a sprig of parsley is now dipped into salted water, a blessing is said and the parsley is eaten. This is reminiscent of the Greco/Roman custom of dipping vegetables in salt water or vinegar. These were eaten as appetizers.

Leader

The parsley symbolizes the promise of new life that is brought about by the coming of the spring. The salt water symbolizes the sweat of the Israelites as they built the store houses of Pithom and Rameses II and the tears that they shed during their

enslavement in Egypt. When the parsley and salt water are eaten, they remind us that new beginnings, like the new life of freedom that the Israelites longed for, are often built on a foundation of hard work, sweat and tears.

Reader

This Last Supper Celebration that we share tonight is also a new beginning for us. We show our respect for the religious traditions of the Jewish people by understanding that the prayers and rituals sacred to them are their precious heritage. We show respect for ourselves and our religious traditions by seeking to find new and appropriate ways of expressing our spiritual need to draw close to the Last Supper and the early historical beginnings of our faith.

Reader

The parsley reminds us that the religious creative spirit is an ever-renewing source of blessing for us and for all the world.

Reader

The salt water reminds us of the tears that should be shed by all people of faith for the religious wars that have damaged and still damage individuals, communities and entire nations.

Leader

We are going to pray for renewal. After the prayer, please dip a piece of parsley in the salt water, and then eat the parsley. Let us pray:

Together

Gracious God, you are the Source of new life and hope. We thank you for the foods that grow in the earth and nourish us. Please help us to remember that you are a loving god to all your creations. Grant that we may be messengers of hope and renewal in our daily lives, for ourselves, for our church and for our community. Amen.

Dip the parsley in salt water and eat it.

The Breaking Of The Middle Matzah

Rabbi/Leader (*Hold up a piece of matzah*)

This is a piece of matzah. It is bread that is made without yeast, so it is unleavened. Matzah is made and eaten all year long. However, only matzah made for Passover may be eaten by Jews during the Passover festival. Exodus 12:39 explains, "With the dough they had brought from Egypt, they baked cakes of unleavened bread. The dough was without yeast because they had been driven out of Egypt and did not have time to prepare food for themselves."

Reader

Matzah for Passover must be specially prepared. All the utensils and even the ovens in which it is baked must be thoroughly cleaned to make sure that there is no left over flour or old matzah present. To make Passover matzah, ground flour that has been carefully guarded so that no water or wild yeast can affect it, is mixed with water, rolled flat, and baked for no longer than 18 minutes. It is then packed in a box that is marked "kosher for Passover".

If you have handmade matzah, show it and explain that it is made by hand rather than by machine.

Reader

During the eight days of Passover, observant Jews only eat bread, rolls, cookies, crackers or any other baked goods that are made with Passover matzah flour. Regular pasta is not eaten, and Jews from Eastern European backgrounds do not eat rice.

Rabbi/Leader

In a traditional Jewish Seder, there are three special matzahs on the table in front of the leader. The middle of three matzahs is broken, and half of the matzah is set aside as the Afikomen, (Af-ee-koh-men), a Greek word that means “dessert.” Later, while dinner is being eaten, the Afikomen is hidden. Near the end of dinner, the children search for the Afikomen. It must be found and redeemed in order for the Seder to come to a conclusion. Gifts of small toys, money and candy are traditional as currency used to redeem the Afikomen. Once the Afikomen is redeemed, it is distributed and everyone is given a little piece to eat.

Leader

Tonight as we break the middle matzah and hide the Afikomen, we remember that Jesus told the parable of the Lost Sheep in which the Good Shepherd searches for and finds the one sheep that was lost. When our community is broken, God comes to search out the ones who are alienated in order to restore our unity. It is also our responsibility to be mindful of those in our community who have gone astray and need our help, love and support.

Reader

During difficult times, such as those we are currently experiencing, it is even more critical to be aware of the health and wellbeing of all the people we know and love. In addition, special sensitivity and awareness needs to be cultivated so that we can mitigate the suffering of those who are most vulnerable in our society.
Break the middle matzah and put one half aside to hide during dinner.

Reader

Jesus reflected the rabbinical tradition of which he was a part when he taught, “There will be more rejoicing in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous people who have no need to repent.”* In a real way, our celebration is not fulfilled and our community is not complete until that which is lost has been found.

*Luke 15:7

Telling The Story Of The Exodus From Egypt – The Four Questions**Rabbi/Leader**

The telling of the story of the Israelites’ journey from slavery to freedom is the central focus of the traditional Passover Seder. The story is told in a variety of ways. The first is in the form of a Question and Answer dialogue called, “The Four Questions.” The four questions in a Jewish Haggadah deal with specific ritual foods and actions that are unique to the Passover Seder. These are the Jewish Four Questions.

Reader

Why is this night different from all other nights?

Q1 On all other nights we eat hametz (hah-MAYTZ) or matzah. On this night we eat only matzah.

Q2 On all other nights we eat any type of herbs. On this night, we eat bitter herbs.

Q3 On all other nights we do not dip even once. On this night, we dip twice.

Q4 On all other nights we eat sitting or reclining. On this night we recline.

Reader

What do these questions mean? In the first question, the word “hametz” (hah-MAYTZ) is a Hebrew word that means “leavened bread.” In the Biblical Book of Exodus, God tells the Israelites that during Passover they must abstain from eating leavened foods for seven days.* Outside of the land of Israel, Jews celebrate Passover for eight days and eat matzah for eight days for reasons having to do with the Jewish calendar.

*Exodus 13:6-7

Reader

Abstaining from regular bread and eating matzah is performed in memory of the Exodus from Egypt, when the Israelites' dough did not have time to rise.

Reader

The second question asks about herbs. We have already eaten parsley, which is considered a bitter herb. A little later, we will eat some horseradish, which is also bitter. The eating of these herbs is a reminder of the bitterness of the slavery of the Israelites when they lived in Egypt.

Reader

The third question asks about dipping. The dipping refers to the dipping of parsley in salt water and the dipping of a piece of horseradish in charoset, (ha-ROW-set) a sweet nut and fruit mixture that we will taste in a little while.

Reader

The fourth question that we just read is not original part to the four questions. At the time that Jesus lived, there was a different question from the one we read tonight. In Jesus' time, the Temple in Jerusalem was still operating as a religious center for the Israelite religion. Animal sacrifices were regularly brought to the Temple. For Passover, an offering of a lamb was mandatory. During the time of Jesus, the fourth question was, "On other nights, we eat meat roasted, stewed or baked. Why on this night do we only eat roasted meat?"

Reader

Israelites ate only roasted meat (usually lamb) on the night of the Seder because the Book of Exodus mandated roasted meat for first night of Passover.* In addition, these verses require that the meat be eaten with bitter herbs and unleavened bread.

*Exodus 10: 8-10

Reader

After the Temple in Jerusalem was destroyed by the Romans in 70 C.E., the Jews were no longer able to sacrifice the Pascal lamb. It was at about this time that the fourth question was changed to the one that is used today.

Reader

The new question refers to the custom of relaxing in a chair during the Seder. Most often this custom is practiced by the leader of the Seder. The leader sits in an armchair and rests his or her left forearm on a pillow, leaning back in the chair and slightly to the left. This posture is reminiscent of the way in which Roman and Greek nobles relaxed on sofas when they participated in festive meals. The Romans of the first century were the "free" people in Jerusalem. By incorporating this custom into the Seder, the rabbis, who structured the early rituals, were sending the message that everyone who attends a Seder is a free person, not a slave.

Reader

We get a glimpse of this tradition when we read Matthew's description of the Last Supper. "The disciples did as Jesus had directed them and prepared the Passover. When evening came, *Jesus was reclining at the table with the Twelve, and while they were eating* he said, 'I tell you the truth, one of you will betray me.'"*

*Matthew 26:19-21

Leader

Our Last Supper Celebration needs its own four questions in order to focus on the special nature of this evening.

Reader

Why is this night different from all other nights?

Together

On all other nights, we recite words of holiness steeped in tradition. On this night we celebrate a new liturgy and ritual.

Reader

On all other nights we tell stories in the voices of the past, or speak of matters of concern in the present.

Together

On this night, we blend ancient and modern words, stories, values and ideals.

Reader

On all other nights, we expect our religious institutions to make us feel spiritual.

Together On this night, we take responsibility for our own spiritual seeking.

Reader

On all other nights, Jewish rituals are not part of our spiritual life.

Together

On this night, we study the Jewish religious and historical background of the Last Supper, seeking to incorporate new insights into a deeper sense of Christian spiritual awareness.

Narrative Story Telling

Rabbi/Leader

Another way of relating the story of the journey from slavery to freedom is through narrative story and song. Our story begins in Egypt with Moses and the Children of Israel. The Israelites were slaves to Pharaoh. They toiled under terrible conditions, building storehouses to hold Pharaoh's wealth. The Israelites cried out to God for help. God heard their cries of distress and told Moses to go to Pharaoh and tell Pharaoh to let the Israelites go free. Pharaoh refused Moses' request. God sent 10 plagues against Pharaoh.

Reader

And the Lord spoke to Moses, "Go to Pharaoh, and say to him, 'thus says the Lord, Let my people go, that they may serve me.'" Exodus 8:1

Together we sing a spiritual that describes these events.

Together: Let My People Go

Words appear at the back of the Haggadah.

Leader

Many Egyptians suffered and died because of the plagues. Although we rejoice that the Israelites were finally freed from slavery, we mourn for those who suffered and died. In memory of the death of the first born of Egypt, first born Jews fast on the day leading up to the first night of Passover.

Reader

We remember that Jewish tradition teaches that each person at a Seder should feel as though he or she personally experienced the redemption from Egypt. To demonstrate that personal sense of freedom and a personal concern for the Egyptians who died and for

their families who mourned them, Jewish tradition instructs us to remove ten drops of sweetness from our cups as we recite the catalogue of the Biblical ten plagues.

Rabbi/Leader

As we read each plague, we use the tip of our pinky finger to remove a drop of wine or grape juice from our cup (*demonstrate*) and we put the drop on the side of our plate. We read together as we perform this ritual.

Place a drop of the wine or grape juice on your plate after you read the name of the plague.

Together

1. The Nile turned blood red.
2. Frogs overran the banks of all bodies of water and invaded the land of Egypt.
3. Lice infested all living creatures.
4. Swarms of insects flew across the land, stinging and biting all living things.
5. All the cattle died of a mysterious disease.
6. People mysteriously broke out in boils.
7. Hail as big as baseballs fell over the land.
8. Locusts swarmed over the land, devouring all the crops.
9. Darkness descended over the land, so that one could not tell day from night.
10. Death came to all the first-born of Egypt.

Reader

There are also plagues that afflict our world today. We remove another ten drops of sweetness as we recite ten plagues that affect us and our world.

Together

1. The waging of war;
2. Religious intolerance;
3. Cynicism and lack of hope;
4. Disregard for our own true needs and feelings;
5. Callous disregard for the feelings of others;
6. Inadequate support for our houses of worship and religious institutions;
7. Exploitation of those in our society who are weak or vulnerable;
8. Judging others according to age, gender, gender orientation, appearance, religion, race, or national origin;
9. Acceptance of violence and negative messages in the media;
10. Pollution of our planet.

Reader

Our story continues with the account from the Book of Exodus. The 10th plague was the death of the firstborn of all but the Israelites.

Reader

And it came to pass, that at midnight the Lord slew all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, including the firstborn of Pharaoh. A great wailing arose in Egypt, for there was not a house where there was not someone who had died.”*

*Exodus 12:29-30

Reader

Pharaoh called for Moses and Aaron in the dead of night and said to them, “Go from this land! Go! Serve this Lord, as you have said.”*

*Exodus 12:31

Reader

The Israelites baked unleavened cakes of dough, for there was no time for the bread to rise and they hurried and left Egypt as quickly as possible. God created a pillar of fire to guide them at night and a pillar of cloud to guide them during the day.

Reader

But after the Israelites had left their homes and had started on their journey, Pharaoh forgot the pain of the loss of his firstborn and sent his army and his chariots to pursue the Israelites and to bring them back to be his slaves.

Reader

When the Israelites were camped by the shores of the Reed Sea, they saw that the chariots were pursuing them and they called out to God in terror and distress. And the Lord parted the waters of the sea and the Israelites crossed over to the other shore on dry land.

Reader

When the chariots saw the path through the water, they tried to follow the Israelites. But the water closed over them, drowning them and saving the Israelites.

Reader

Miriam the Prophetess, sister of Moses and Aaron, led the women in sacred song and dance to praise the Lord and to give thanks for their deliverance from the hand of Pharaoh and from the shackles of slavery.

Reader

All too often, our histories ignore the contributions of women who struggled to create a better life for themselves, their families, and their communities.

Together

In this sacred moment, we give thanks for the women of all religions and cultures throughout the ages, most of whom had lives that were undocumented. Some of these women have names that are known to us, but most are anonymous. One woman who was not unknown was Mary, the mother of Jesus.

Reader

In about the year 1 C.E., a baby was born to Mary and Joseph, two Jews, in a stable in the town of Bethlehem. Jesus grew and became strong, increasing in wisdom. The grace of God was upon him.

Reader

Jesus became a rabbi – a teacher – and taught people about God, drawing them closer to their sacred Jewish heritage. Jesus healed those who were sick and performed many miracles. In doing so, he attracted many disciples, some of whom traveled with him through the land of Judea.

Reader

In 30 C.E., Jesus went to Jerusalem with his disciples for the festival of Passover. Although the New Testament seems to indicate that the Last Supper was a celebration of Passover,* some scholars believe that the Last Supper occurred the night before the first night of Passover.

*Matthew 26:17-19; Mark 14:12-16; Luke 22:7-13

Reader

Whether it was a regular dinner or a Passover Seder, we know that in an upper room, Jesus celebrated the Last Supper with his disciples. If it was Passover, it is likely that he and the disciples ate pieces of the roasted Pascal lamb with bitter herbs and unleavened bread, as the Bible commands.*

*Exodus 12:8

Reader

The New Testament describes the meal, the rituals, and the discussions that took place.

Reader

While Jesus and the disciples were eating, Jesus said, “I tell you the truth, one of you will betray me.’ They (the disciples) were very sad and began to say to him one after the other, ‘Surely not I, Lord?’ Jesus replied, ‘The one who has dipped his hand into the bowl with me will betray me.’”*

*Matthew 26:21-23

Reader

Then Judas, the one who would betray him said, ‘Surely not I, Rabbi?’ Jesus answered, ‘Yes, it is you.’ *

Matthew 26:25

Reader

We read in John’s gospel about other things that happened during the meal.

Reader

The evening meal was being served, and the devil had already prompted Judas Iscariot, son of Simon, to betray Jesus. Jesus knew that the Father had put all things under his power, and that he had come from God and was returning to God; so he got up from the meal, took off his outer clothing, and wrapped a towel around his waist. After that, he poured water into a basin and began to wash his disciples’ feet, drying them with the towel that was wrapped around him.*

*John 13:2-5

Reader

Jesus washed the feet of the disciples as a sign of their commission for the sacred tasks ahead of them. He gave them a new commandment.

Together

“Love one another. As I have loved you, so must you love one another.” John 13:34

Reader

The term “Maundy” as in Maundy Thursday is derived from the Latin word *mandatum*, which is the Vulgate’s translation of the word “commandment” in John 13:34: “A new commandment I give to you...”

Reader

Jesus took bread and after blessing it, he broke it, as we broke the matzah earlier, and gave it to the disciples. He said to them, “Take and eat; this is my body.”*

*Matthew 26:26

Reader

Then Jesus took the cup of wine and after giving thanks, he gave it to them saying, “Drink from it all of you; for this is my blood of the new covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.”*

*Matthew 26:27

Reader

After they had sung a hymn, (which is a traditional part of a Passover Seder,) they went out to the Mount of Olives, and then to Gethsemane, where Jesus prayed.*

*Matthew 26:30-44

Reader

Jesus, who was betrayed by Judas, was arrested, tried, condemned to death, and crucified.

He was buried in a new tomb, and a large stone was used to seal the opening. After the Sabbath, God raised Jesus from the dead. We celebrate Jesus' resurrection on Easter Sunday.

See back of book for lyrics – Song Before the Second Cup

Together - Song

The Second Cup: Redemption From Bondage – Intentional Living

Fill the glasses with wine or grape juice.

Leader

God's second promise to the Israelites was that God would "deliver you from their bondage."* The bondage from which God delivered the Israelites was the bondage of slavery. When one is a slave, one has no ability to direct even the simplest aspects of one's daily life. For a slave, the attempt to live a self-determined life can easily result in death.

* Exodus 6:6

Reader

Even those who are not literally enslaved may still be held in bondage by destructive habits. It is easy to understand how drugs, alcohol, gambling, and even sex can be destructive addictions that can enslave an individual.

Reader

It is less common for us to recognize more subtle ways -healing way.

Reader

If we are lucky, we sometimes get a wake up call that makes us examine the life path we are treading. While life changing situations can be difficult, they can also be a gift. They offer us the opportunity to recognize the possibilities for personal or community change that exist in every breath we take. Living with this understanding and being willing to accept its challenge to make each moment count is what intentional living is all about.

Reader

When every breath we take is imbued with the desire to help to heal the world through our God-given gifts, we are leading an intentional life.

Reader

When we live each day with the intention of making the world a better place, we accept our role as God's partner in healing the world.

Reader

When we wake up to the tremendous power each of us has to bring justice, sweetness, and healing to the world through our intentional awareness and actions, we can create miracles in the world.

Reader

Jesus taught that everything that we have is a gift from God. Every moment of our lives is a precious gift. How we use that gift is our thank-you letter to God.

Reader

How can we lead an intentional life? The words of I Thessalonians offer some advice: “Do not put out the Spirit’s fire; do not treat prophecies with contempt. Test everything. Hold onto the good. Avoid every kind of evil.”*

*I Thessalonians 5:19-22

Leader

The second cup of our celebration is dedicated to the concept of Intentional Living. Let us lift our cups and pray together:

All rise and lift glasses.

Together:

Holy One, Blessed Parent, I give thanks for the gift of life which you have granted me. Help me to use my talents and abilities with kindness, courage, and faith. Help me to understand how best to serve you. May the work of my hands help to fashion a better world for all your creatures. Amen.

All drink and are seated.

Explaining The Foods On The Plate

Rabbi/Leader

The traditional Jewish Seder plate holds samples of the foods that are used during the Seder ritual. Over time, alternate food traditions have been added or substituted for various reasons. For example, Jewish vegetarians substitute a beet for the more traditional lamb shank bone, which is a symbol of the Passover lamb sacrifice when the Temple in Jerusalem was still standing. As we look at and discuss the traditional meanings of these ritual foods, we will also reflect on their special meaning for us.

Leader

What is the meaning of the Parsley?

Reader

In the Jewish tradition, the parsley is a reminder of spring and of the miracle of the renewal of life. For Christians, the parsley can also symbolize the on going cycle of life, death, and new life that is part of our human condition. The parsley also reminds us of the resurrection of Jesus after his death on the cross.

Leader

What is the meaning of the Bitter Herb?

Reader

In Jewish tradition, the bitter herb, which is usually horseradish, is a reminder of the bitterness of slavery that the Israelites experienced under the yoke of the Egyptians.

Reader

For Christians, the horseradish is a reminder of Jesus' pain and suffering. We also reflect on all those who suffer in the world and understand that we are called to a life of service to help relieve that suffering.

Leader

What is the meaning of the Charoset?

Reader

In the Jewish tradition, the chunky texture of the charoset is a reminder of the bricks and mortar the Israelites used to build the storehouses of the Pharaoh.

Reader

For Christians, the charoset may remind us of the complexity of Jesus' experience as he approached the cross, the intermingling of his physical agony and his spiritual joy in fulfilling God's plan for him and for us.

Leader

What is the meaning of the Green Vegetable?

Reader

In the Jewish tradition, the green vegetable, usually celery or romaine lettuce, is a reminder of God's goodness to us in feeding us through the fertility of the earth.

Reader

For Christians, the green vegetable is a reminder of our duty to be good stewards of the earth, so that the earth will continue to provide for us. This is an idea that both Jews and Christians share.

Leader

What is the meaning of the Roasted Lamb Shank bone?

Reader

In the Jewish tradition, the roasted lamb shank bone is a reminder of the Paschal offering that was brought to the Temple in celebration of the Passover ritual described in the Book of Exodus. The loss of the Temple in 70 C.E. is still recalled with bitterness and regret by many Jews. For this reason, at a traditional Seder it is the custom not to point to the bone while discussing its meaning.

Reader

For Christians, the lamb shank bone is a reminder that when John saw Jesus coming to him, John said, "Behold the Lamb of God which takes away the sin of the world."* It also reminds us that Jesus lived during the time when the Paschal sacrifice was still being offered in the Temple in Jerusalem and that Jesus and his followers were part of the Jewish community.

*John 1:29

Leader

What is the meaning of the Beet?

Reader

There is a Jewish tradition that the beet can be substituted for the shank bone, especially if one is a vegetarian. We include it on our Seder plate tonight to indicate that all people are welcome at our table.

Leader

What is the meaning of the Roasted Egg?

Reader

In the Jewish tradition, the roasted egg is a symbol of the special festival offering that was brought to the Temple in Jerusalem. It also symbolizes the eternal cycles of life, death and rebirth.

Reader

For Christians, the roasted egg is a reminder of the Easter egg, a symbol of new life and resurrection.

Hand Washing Ritual

Rabbi/Leader

In traditional Judaism, the ritual hand washing takes place before one eats bread. This ceremony is a carryover from the ritual that the priests performed in the Temple in Jerusalem before the bread offering. In a traditional Jewish Seder, there are two different hand washing rituals. The first comes right after the drinking of the first cup of wine before eating the parsley. The second hand washing comes right before the eating of the matzah and is accompanied by a blessing.

Reader

In some Christian traditions, the ritual washing of hands still takes place, either by individuals entering the church, or by those officiating in the Communion Service. The rite is called, “lavabo” from the Latin meaning “washing.”

Many ancient churches were built with a large fountain in the courtyard. It was the tradition for Christians to wash before entering the church for worship. Many religions have rituals that require ritual hand washing prior to the performance of prayer or other ritual acts.

Reader

On the evening of the Last Supper, Jesus washed the feet of the disciples as a sign of their commission for the sacred tasks ahead of them.* Jesus said, “The greatest among you should be like the least, and the one who rules as the one who serves.” **

* John 22:24-27 ** Luke 22:26

Leader

Tonight we will wash one another’s hands as we remember Jesus’ example of servanthood, and also reflect on our connection with all people, regardless of their

“status” in society. If you don’t know the person whose hands you will be washing, please introduce yourself.

Leader gives directions on hand washing depending on the set up of the room.

Blessing Over The Matzah

Rabbi/Leader

Before every meal in which bread is served, Jewish tradition requires that a blessing for the bread be offered. In a traditional Jewish Seder, two blessings are said at this point. The first is for bread itself, even though leavened bread is not served. The unleavened bread is the substitute. Then a special blessing for the commandment to eat matzah is offered.

Reader

In Biblical days, bread was the center of every meal. To invite a stranger to share the bread of the household was the greatest sign of hospitality. Breaking bread together was the standard method of establishing ties of kinship. Our English word “companion” literally means “one who shares bread.”

Reader

The matzah that we eat tonight is the probably the same kind of bread that Jesus would have blessed and broken at the Last Supper if he and the disciples were celebrating the Seder.

Together

“Now as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed and broke it and gave it to the disciples and said, ‘Take, eat, for this is my body.’”*

* Matthew 26:26

Leader

Together we offer a blessing for food and companionship.

Hold up the plate of matzah.

Together

We give thanks to the Creator, who brings forth nourishment from the earth. In your great wisdom, you have brought us together this night to celebrate a Last Supper Seder . May it be your will that we will find both spiritual and physical nourishment at this table. Amen.

Everyone takes a piece of matzah, breaks off a piece and eats it.

Rabbi/Leader

We now take a piece of horseradish root and combine it with some charoset. This is the “second dipping” referred to in the Jewish Seder’s four questions. The sharp and sweet tastes combine to remind us that life’s sweetness can sometimes be reduced, and

that experiences that are bitter can often be sweetened through love, caring, work, faith and prayer. As we eat the horseradish and haroset together, we reflect on the verse “Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing.”*

*Romans 15:13

All eat the horseradish and charoset.

Dinner Is Served.

During the meal, some communities may want to have a question and answer session, or a more structured discussion on themes related to Maundy Thursday and the Last Supper

During dinner, the leader hides the afikomen. When dinner is over, resume with the redemption of the afikomen. The leader should direct the young people to find the afikomen and bring it to the leader so that they can all collect their reward. All participating should receive a reward.

If there is an offering, it might be celebrated during this time, with musical accompaniment or singing if desired.

Before the Redemption of the Afikomen, the Leader or another person may wish to acknowledge the people who were responsible for creating, preparing, publicizing, and running the . Any other announcements should be made here.

Redemption of the Afikomen

Leader

It is time to redeem the Afikomen.

Leader takes the afikomen from those who found it and distributes the rewards, asking the young people to participate in the reading of the ritual of redemption.

Youth

We searched for that which was lost and we have found it.

All Together

We rejoice when the lost in our communities are found by God’s love and with the agency of human hands, minds and hearts. May we always seek to find those who may be invisible in our society.

Youth

We rejoice that, though not yet adults, we have many gifts and abilities that can help to make our community strong and healthy. We accept with gratitude and joy the opportunity to serve as we reflect on the verse from Proverbs, “As I go forward step by step, the way will be opened up for me.”*

*Proverbs 4:12

Leader

We accept with joy the contributions of our young people, and ask for God's blessing upon them.

All rise. Children stand in front of the leader.

May the Lord bless you and keep you.
May God's face shine upon you and be gracious to you;
May the Lord look kindly upon you and give you peace.*
And let us all say, Amen.
*Numbers 6:24-24

Leader

We share the afikomen as we reflect quietly on our personal needs for God's redemptive blessing.

All are seated. Children distribute the afikomen and then resume their seats. There should be no singing, but soft instrumental music may be played. When the afikomen is distributed, resume.

Blessing After the Meal**Leader**

At this point in a traditional Jewish , a grace after the meals is recited or sung. We are grateful for God's bounty. With a deep appreciation of that which God has blessed us, we offer these words of thanksgiving based on the traditional Jewish blessing after the conclusion of a meal.

Together

Blessed are You, Lord our God, sovereign of the universe who sustains the whole world with goodness, kindness and mercy. You give food to all creatures, for your mercy endures forever. Through your abundant goodness, we have been nourished and our hunger appeased; may we never be in want of sustenance.

We give thanks not only for this food, but for all the things with which you have blessed us. O Merciful one, please send abundant blessings to this House of God in which we sit, to all who serve it, to those who support it, to all who have helped to offer this Last Supper Seder, to those who have participated in preparing and serving this meal, to all who have partaken of it, and to all our friends and loved ones.

Bless those in our community who are not with us tonight and all who are in need of your caring love and support. Grant peace to us and to all the world.

Blessed are You, Holy One, who loves us, watches over us, and gives us courage and strength. Amen.

Hallel – Singing Psalms of Praise and Thanks To God

Rabbi/Leader

Earlier this evening, in recounting the events of the Last Supper, we read Matthew's description of Jesus and the disciples singing a hymn before ending the meal and going to the Mount of Olives.* One of the Passover customs that we know existed during Jesus' lifetime was the singing of Psalms 113-118, by the priests in the Temple during the time that the Passover sacrifice was being offered. The singing of these was incorporated into the home-based Seder, and into worship services during Passover after the destruction of the Temple. While we can't say with certainty that Jesus and the disciples were singing these psalms, the passage from Matthew is certainly suggestive.

*Matthew 26:30-44

Leader

In a Jewish Passover Seder, this is where these psalms would be read and sung. We honor God, the Jewish roots of our faith, and our shared scriptures now with the reading and singing of some of these psalms. We read Psalm 114 together.

Together

When Israel came out of Egypt,
the house of Jacob from a people of foreign tongue,
Judah became God's sanctuary,
Israel his dominion.
The sea looked and fled,
the Jordan turned back;
the mountains skipped like rams,
the hills like lambs.
Why was it, O sea, that you fled,
O Jordan, that you turned back,
you mountains, that you skipped like rams,
you hills, like lambs?
Tremble, O earth, at the presence of the Lord,
at the presence of the God of Jacob,
who turned the rock into a pool,
the hard rock into springs of water.
Psalm 114

Leader

Let us sing this verse from Psalm 118.

Open for me the Gates of Righteousness

Pitchu li shaarei tzedek
Avo vamodeh Yah.
Open up for me the gates of righteousness,

That I may enter and praise the Lord.
Psalm 118:19; Musical Setting: Shlomo Carlebach

The Third Cup: The Cup of Redemption and the Gift of Diversity

Leader

God promised the Israelites: “I will redeem you with an outstretched arm and through extraordinary measures.”*

*Exodus 6:6

Reader

When we reach out with a whole heart to people who are different from ourselves, we help to heal the world. We remember the words of Matthew: “Judge not that ye be not judged.”*

* Matthew 7:1

Reader

When we celebrate diversity, we acknowledge that all people, all cultures, and all traditions that seek to create peace are as valid as our own. We do not label them as “other.” We do not say that we must “understand” them so that we can give them respect. Rather, we unconditionally give them the respect that we expect to be given to us simply because they are human beings with whom we share God’s world.

Leader

Lifting up the idea of diversity is not that difficult, but it can be very challenging to live the intention of diversity. Only by looking inward at those things that keep us from fully acknowledging those who are different from ourselves can we make the leap from good thoughts to right action. This is hard work, but pursuing it has the potential for creating positive change in the world. That is why embracing diversity is an act of redemptive power.

The third cup is poured. All rise.

Leader

We join together in a blessing for the Cup of Redemption and the Gift of Diversity.

Together

We give thanks to you, Creator of all things, for the fruit of the vine. In your infinite wisdom, you have taught us to fight for freedom for all your people. In that striving, help us to embrace not only the concept of freedom, but the gift of diversity, which lifts our souls and enriches our lives. Give us strength to use this gift with courage and determination, so to bring healing and redemption to the world. Amen.

All drink.

Leader: Let us sing together.

See back of book for lyrics – Song for the Third Cup.

Together - Song

Welcoming Our Neighbors

Rabbi/Leader

In a traditional Jewish Seder, the front door of the home is now opened to welcome Elijah the Prophet, for whom a special cup has been set on the table. Jewish tradition teaches that the arrival of Elijah will herald the coming of the Jewish Messiah and an age of peace. The link between Passover and the coming of Elijah occurred because Passover is a festival of redemption for the Jewish people.

Reader

Part of the traditional Passover liturgy reads, “All who are hungry, let them enter and eat. All who are in need, let them come celebrate Passover.”

Leader

On our table, we have set aside a Cup of Community. It is empty, and symbolizes the peace that will only be made manifest when all people work together to create a community and society that is pledged to creating harmony, justice, prosperity, and peace for all. To demonstrate our commitment to this ideal, we will fill the cup with water, the source of life for all God’s creatures. Please pass the cup around the table, adding a little water from your own glass to demonstrate your individual intention to work for the betterment of our community and our society.

All rise, pass the cup, and fill it with water from their own cups. Everyone remains standing.

Leader

The Cup of Community is also on our table to represent all those who are not here with us this evening. In opening our doors, we remind ourselves of the importance of always maintaining an open door for those who are hungry for food, friendship, and community. In reaching out to one another, we bring closer the day when the world will be at peace.

Reader

As we open our doors in welcome to all who would join us, we remember Matthew's description of Jesus' teaching of how one should behave toward those who are in need.

Together

"I was hungry, and you gave me something to eat; I was thirsty, and you gave me drink; I was a stranger, and you invited me in; naked, and you clothed me; I was sick, and you visited me; I was in prison, and you came to me."*

*Matthew 25:35-36

The lights are dimmed and someone goes to the door and opens it. If donations of food were brought by the participants to the Celebration, this food is brought to the doorway to symbolize the fact that it will be distributed to all in need. An offering might also be initiated at this time.

Leader

The open door also symbolizes a potent opportunity for personal growth and change. Jesus taught, quoting Leviticus 19:18, "Love your neighbor as you love yourself."* Loving yourself means taking the time to reflect on what your own needs are, and making a commitment to pay attention to and address those personal needs.

We take this sacred time to reflect on the matters that are closest to our heart. This is a time of immanence, when the world stands still and the gates of heaven are open to our prayers and supplications. We pray silently. Please be seated after you have completed your prayers and remain in prayerful silence until all are seated.

*Matthew 22:39

After participants are all seated, the door is closed. Instrumental music may be played during the silent meditation. The lights are still dimmed.

Leader: Let us sing together.

See back of book for lyrics – Song Before the Fourth Cup

Together - Song

After the song, wait a moment in silence and then turn on the lights.

The Fourth Cup: The Cup of Holiness and Salvation**Rabbi/Leader**

The fourth and final cup is inspired by the covenantal statement in Exodus: "I will take you to be my people, and I will be your God"*

* Exodus 6:7

Leader

Holiness and Salvation are gifts available to all people. In Leviticus, we read: "I am the Lord who brought you up out of Egypt to be your God; therefore be holy, because I am holy."* Peter made reference to this verse when he said, "Just as He who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do, for it is written: "Be holy, because I am holy."

These verses remind us of the strong scriptural and cultural links between Judaism and Christianity. Even though we differ in certain aspects of practice and faith, our sacred scriptures remind us that we share a bond of holiness and responsibility to work together to heal the world. *Leviticus 11:45 ** I Peter 1:15-16

Reader

We reflect on these powerful verses from Romans: “For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved. As the Scripture says, ‘Anyone who trusts in Him will never be put to shame.’ For there is no difference between Jew and Gentile—the same Lord is Lord of all and richly blesses all who call on Him, for ‘everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved’.” *

*Romans 10:10-14; Romans 10:11 quoting Isaiah 28:16; Romans 10:13 quoting Joel 2:32

Reader

With the drinking of this fourth, final cup, we commit ourselves to broadening our understanding of holiness, faith, and salvation so that we can truly discern the holiness that resides in all people.

Leader

Let us pray.

Together

Blessed are you, Eternal God, who has given us the fruit of the vine, which lifts the heart and gives us joy. We give thanks for the gift of discernment that permits us to grow in faith, service, and holiness. Amen.

Looking Toward Jerusalem, the City of Peace

Rabbi/Leader

The traditional Jewish Seder ends with a focus on Jerusalem, the spiritual center for the Jewish people. Jerusalem is also important to Christians and Moslems, and is, of course, the city in which the Last Supper took place. Even before the building of the Israelite Temple in Jerusalem, what is today called “the temple mount” was a holy place to other religious groups. As we begin to conclude our celebration, we pray for peace in Jerusalem, in Israel, and in all the world.

See back of book for lyrics – Songs for Peace

Together - Song

Concluding Prayer

Rabbi/Leader

As we prepare to conclude our Last Supper Seder, we reflect on this beautiful verse from I Corinthians. “I will pray with my spirit, but I will also pray with my mind; I will sing with my spirit, but I will also sing with my mind.”*

*I Corinthians 14:15

Leader

Let us give thanks together for the special time we have spent together this evening. We read together:

Together

How can I repay the Lord for all God's goodness to me?
I will lift up the cup of salvation and call on the name of the Lord.
I will fulfill my vows to the Lord in the presence of all God's people.*
*Psalm 116:12-14

Leader

We came together tonight not knowing where this journey would lead us.

Together

We pray that God will be with us on our separate paths, and with us when we join in community. Until we meet again, may the grace of God go with us.

All rise.

SONG OF LEAVE-TAKING

Tefillat Haderech – Prayer for Traveling

Words and Music by Debbie Friedman

May we be blessed as we go on our way,
May we be guided in peace,
May we be blessed with health and joy,
May this be our blessing, amein.

Chorus

Amein, amein, may this be our blessing,
Amein (2X)

May be sheltered by the wings of peace,
May we be kept in safety and in love,
May grace and compassion
Find their way to every soul,
May this be our blessing, amein.

Chorus

End of Last Supper Seder and Haggadah

Last Supper Seder Dinner – Passover Foods – Suggestions from Rabbi Jo David

Note: For these recipes, do not use any dairy products – i.e., butter, milk, cream. You can use any butter-style spread that is labeled “parve” – which means that it can be used with either meat dishes or dairy dishes. Eggs are ok. Fish is ok.

No bread crumbs, bread, or other similar wheat products should be used. Ditto pasta. As a substitute use Matza meal (can be used for breading). There is also Passover cake flour, which can be used for baked goods.

Chicken Soup with matza balls – I suggest that you buy this from a local Jewish deli/restaurant. If the matza balls are big, cut them in half and serve ½ per person

Entrée Possibilities

Roast Chicken – any recipe or Chicken Tagine – a Moroccan dish that is eaten by Sephardic Jews. I have a good recipe. Not too difficult, but more work than roast chicken. If you want it, I’ll send the recipe.

Brisket of Beef – I’ll send the recipe if you want to do this. It’s very easy.

Roast Turkey/turkey breast – it might be easy and as inexpensive if you can buy a roast turkey that is pre-cut and put back on the bone.

If a fish dish is desired, I suggest poached salmon

Side dishes

Potato kugel – probably best to buy a large pan from your Jewish restaurant/deli.

However, recipes are available, and I can send a good one to you if you think your cooks would like to try this. It’s not too difficult.

Steamed green beans with toasted almonds

Tzimmes – see recipe – very traditional

White Bean and artichoke salad – Sephardic. (I haven’t tried this, but it sounds good and is easy.)

Dessert

For the cakes, you can buy these from the Jewish deli – they should be wrapped and marked “kosher for Passover”. If you have bakers who want to bake Passover cakes, I’ll send recipes. There’s a really terrific Passover Sponge Cake Recipe. See Below.

Fresh Fruit Salad

Passover Macaroons

Passover Honey Cake

Passover Sponge Cake

Passover Marble Cake

White Bean and artichoke salad – Sephardic. (I haven’t tried this, but it sounds good and is easy.)

Ingredients

- 3 cups white beans, drained
- 1/2 (14 ounce) can artichoke hearts, drained and quartered
- 2/3 cup diced green bell pepper
- 1/3 cup chopped black olives
- 1/4 cup chopped red onion
- 1/4 cup chopped fresh parsley
- 1/4 ounce chopped fresh mint leaves
- 3/4 teaspoon dried basil
- 1/3 cup olive oil
- 1/4 cup red wine vinegar
- salt and pepper to taste

Manischewitz Matzo Cake Meal Sponge Cake

This is a wonderful, delicious sponge cake that's good at any time of the year, but is especially wonderful at Passover. The recipe for this cake is on the side panel of the Manischewitz Matzo Cake Meal box.

Ingredients

- 1/2 cup Manischewitz Matzo Cake Meal
- 1/2 cup Manischewitz Potato Starch
- 3 tablespoons lemon juice
- 1 1/2 teaspoons of grated lemon rind
- 6 eggs, separated
- 1 1/3 cups sugar
- 1/4 cup cold water
- 1/4 teaspoon salt

Directions

1. Using an electric hand beater or a stationary electric mixer, beat egg yolks slightly.
2. Gradually beat in sugar until mixture is light and fluffy.
3. Add water, lemon rind and lemon juice; beat thoroughly.

4. Gradually mix in matzah cake meal and potato starch
5. In a separate bowl, combine egg whites and salt. Beat until stiff, but do not overbeat.
6. Gently fold beaten egg whites into batter until well blended.
7. Pour into an ungreased 9-inch tube pan.
8. Pre-heat oven.
9. Bake at 325 degrees F for 70 minutes or until cake springs back when touched lightly.
10. Invert pan and cool thoroughly before removing cake.

This cake is very moist. It can be served plain or with a fruit sauce. It is also wonderful toasted and spread with jam.

Photo and Video Release
Last Supper Seder
Woodbury Union Church, Presbyterian
Warwick, Rhode Island
Sunday, March 21, 2010

Please write in the number that appears on your haggadah _____

Consent to Video Recording or Photography

You are being asked for your consent to have a video / tape recording of yourself or your picture used for educational and promotional purposes in all media including print, web-based, and video for the following organizations and individuals:

Woodbury Union Church, Presbyterian, Warwick, Rhode Island
Rabbi Jo David – Multifaith Ministry, NYC

We ask that you read and sign this form as an indication of your consent.

Purpose of the project:

The organizations and individuals listed above seek to support and encourage religious understanding throughout the world. Your cooperation in agreeing to have your image used will help to create peace in the world.

Risks and benefits:

We do not believe this usage will result in either special risk or direct benefit to you. You will not receive any compensation, nor will you incur any cost.

Further information:

You may contact Rabbi Jo David for information relating to her use of this material, and for information about its use by NYTS. 212-249-0799 Fax: 212-249-5142, RabbiJo@RabbiJoDavid.org.

Signature of person interviewed or photographed:

I have read the above information, have had the opportunity to ask questions, and have had any questions answered to my satisfaction. I agree to have a video / tape recording of myself or picture used in the ways described above.

Name – Print	Signature	Phone or e-mail

Woodbury Survey

Comments and Reflections

Last Supper Seder

Facilitated by Revered Beth Appel and Rabbi Jo David

Woodbury Union Church, Presbyterian

Warwick, Rhode Island Sunday, March 21, 2010

Please write in the number that appears on your haggadah_____

Please note

The Last Supper Seder is a Demonstration Project that is part of a Doctor of Ministry dissertation being prepared by Rabbi Jo David for New York Theological Seminary. Your comments will help to refine the liturgy and the ritual. Please feel free to add comments other than those that are specifically asked for. There are two parts of this Comment and Reflections document. The first asks for responses to the part of the Seder that will take part Before Dinner. The Second part asks for feedback on the liturgy and ritual that follows the dinner. Thank you for your help.

Part I – Before Dinner

1. Prior to this experience, did you have any knowledge of the Passover holiday as celebrated by Jewish people other than accounts in the New Testament?

___yes ___no Please explain.

1. **Have you ever attended a Passover Seder at someone's home?** ___yes ___no
___I attended a Passover Seder but not in someone's home. Please explain.

2. **If you had time to read the introduction prior to the Seder, did you find it helpful?**

___I didn't have time to read it ___I read it and found it helpful ___I read it but did not find it helpful ___It was too long ___It didn't give enough information
I would have liked to have had the following included in the introduction:

4. **Overall, how did you respond to the experience of having the Seder led by a minister and a rabbi?** ___I liked it ___no opinion ___I didn't like it Please explain.

5. **Overall, how did you respond to having the entire text of the haggadah?** ___I liked it ___no opinion ___I didn't like it Please explain.

6. **Overall, how did you like the experience of participating in the Seder by reading aloud from the haggadah?** ___I liked it ___no opinion ___I didn't like it Please explain.

7. **What things in the First Part of the Seder did you enjoy most?**

Please explain.

8. What things in the First Part of the Seder did you ____ enjoy least ____ not enjoy at all

Please explain.

9. Of the musical selections that were sung, which did you enjoy most/least

Most _____ Least _____

10 Could you suggest other musical selections that you think should be included?

11. With respect to the way the prayers were written, please pick one ____ I liked them ____ I didn't like them Please explain.

12 Material about Judaism and the Old Testament was woven into the liturgy.

Please respond to the following: ____ I found the material interesting ____ I learned things I didn't know about Judaism ____ I learned things I didn't know about the Old Testament ____ The amount of material about Judaism seemed well balanced overall ____ The material about the Old Testament seemed well balanced overall ____ I didn't find the material about Judaism interesting ____ I didn't learn anything new ____ about the Old Testament ____ There was too much material about Judaism ____ There was ____ too much material about the Old Testament Please explain.

13. Overall, how would you rate your experience of the First Part of the Seder?

____ I enjoyed it very much ____ I enjoyed it somewhat ____ No opinion ____ I didn't enjoy it at all. Please explain.

14. What do you think would make the First Part of the Seder even more interesting/enjoyable?

Comments and Reflections - Last Supper Seder

Facilitated by Revered Beth Appel and Rabbi Jo David

Woodbury Union Church, Presbyterian

Warwick, Rhode Island Sunday, March 21, 2010

Please write in the number that appears on your haggadah_____

Part II – After Dinner

- 1. There were four cups of grape juice to drink during the Seder.** Each was associated with a Biblical verse and a social justice concept. If you were designing this Seder, which of the following would you do: (you can choose more than one. If you do so, please order your preference from 1- most interested, etc.) ____keep the cups they way they are ____associate each cup with a Biblical personality ____associate each cup with an historical figure ____associate each cup with a famous woman ____associate each cup with a Book of the New Testament ____associate each cup with a figure from the New Testament ____ associate each cup with a modern person ____do something different with each cup –i.e., cup 1 – a biblical figure, cup 2 – an historical figure, cup 3 – a social justice concept, cup 4 – a modern person
Comments: _____
- 2. In Part II of the Seder, we read and sang psalms. One of these was partially in Hebrew.** Please comment on this experience. ____I liked singing the Hebrew ____It was too difficult singing the Hebrew ____I didn't like singing the Hebrew Please explain. _____
- 3. In Part II, we spoke briefly about the city of Jerusalem. Please comment about that inclusion in the Seder.**
____I thought that it was appropriate ____ I thought it was politically loaded ____ I didn't like it ____ Please explain. _____
- 4. What things in the Second Part of the Seder did you enjoy most?** Please explain. _____
- 5. What things in the Second Part of the Seder did you ____ enjoy least ____not enjoy at all** Please explain. _____
- 6. Overall, how did you like the entire experience of the Last Supper Seder?** ____ I liked it ____ no opinion ____ I didn't like it Please explain. _____
- 7. If you were creating this Seder, what are some things that you would like to include?** _____
- 8. If you were creating this Seder, what are some things that you would not include?** _____
- 9. Of the musical selections that were sung in Part II, which did you enjoy most/least**

Most _____ Least _____

10. Could you suggest other musical selections that you think should be included?

11. If you were creating this Seder, which things would you change or do differently?

12. How did you feel about the entire Seder from a spiritual perspective? (Feel free to choose more than one.) ____ I felt spiritually moved in a good way ____ It had no spiritual effect on me ____ It generally made me feel positive ____ It made me feel hopeful It made me want to get more involved in social action. Please explain

13. The Last Super Seder is an attempt to help Christians feel closer to the events of the Last Supper and its Passover roots. Please respond to the following. Choose as many as you like. ____ I think this goal was realized. ____ I don't think this goal was reached. ____ After experiencing this Seder, I understand the Last Supper more ____ After experiencing this Seder, my understanding of the Last Supper is unchanged Please explain

14. This Seder was developed to be presented on Maundy Thursday/Holy Thursday. ____ This is a good program for Maundy Thursday ____ I would enjoy this experience at any time leading up to Easter ____ I don't think this should be offered on Maundy Thursday ____ I don't think this should be offered at any time leading up to Easter ____ I don't think this program should be offered at all.
Please explain.

15. Did you enjoy the dinner? ____yes ____no Please explain/make suggestions

16. If this program was offered again, would you attend? ____yes ____no ____maybe

Please explain.

Woodbury Union Church, Presbyterian – Responses to Questionnaire

Part I

The first questionnaire asked questions about the experience of the Seder prior to the dinner. There were 14 questions. 51 response sheets were returned. Not all responders answered all the questions. For some questions, responders gave multiple answers. The questions and responses follow:

1. *Prior to this experience, did you have any knowledge of the Passover holiday as celebrated by Jewish people other than accounts in the New Testament?*

30 yes 20 no

2. *Have you ever attended a Passover Seder at someone's home?*

6 yes 41 no 4 I attended a Passover Seder but not in someone's home.

3. *If you had time to read the introduction prior to the Seder, did you find it helpful?*

37 I didn't have time to read it 10 I read it and found it helpful 4 I read it but did not find it helpful

4. *Overall, how did you respond to the experience of having the Seder led by a minister and a rabbi?*

50 I liked it 1 no opinion

5. *Overall, how did you respond to having the entire text of the Haggadah?*

46 I liked it 4 no opinion

6. *Overall, how did you like the experience of participating in the Seder by reading aloud from the Haggadah?*

45 I liked it 1 no opinion 4 I didn't like it

7. What things in the First Part of the Seder did you enjoy most?

The comments varied from “all,” to comments about learning about the meaning of the food and other rituals related to the Passover Seder. Here are some of the comments.

“Translation of Jewish tradition into Christian meaning.”

“I liked the Afikomen.”

“The readings and explanations.” (A number of similar comments.)

“Participation made it more meaningful.” (Several similar comments about participation.)

“Sensational event – awesome concept.”

“Liked comparison of Seder and Last Supper. Shows how alike we are.”

8. What things in the First Part of the Seder did you ____ enjoy least ____not enjoy at all

Comment: Very few of the responders answered this question. Those who did focused on the positive aspects of “reading aloud” and singing. There were also a number of comments by people who didn’t seem to understand the reason for eating the horseradish. These comments were of the “I didn’t like the horseradish” variety.

9. Of the musical selections that were sung, which did you enjoy most/least

20 responders specifically mentioned that they enjoyed singing “Go Down Moses.” No responders gave a negative response to this question.

10. Could you suggest other musical selections that you think should be included?

There were no responses to this question.

11. With respect to the way the prayers were written, please pick one

38 I liked them

12. *Material about Judaism and the Old Testament was woven into the liturgy.*

Please respond to the following: (Note: I did not include options here for which there were no responses. There were multiple responses to this question.)

37 I found the material interesting 20 I learned things I didn't know about Judaism

20 I learned things I didn't know about the Old Testament

17 The material about the Old Testament seemed well balanced overall

13. *Overall, how would you rate your experience of the First Part of the Seder?*

43 I enjoyed it very much 6 I enjoyed it somewhat

Comments:

“Fun.”

“Easy learning.”

“Intelligent combination of both religions.”

“Could be shortened.”

14. *What do you think would make the First Part of the Seder even more interesting/enjoyable?*

Comments ranged from the mundane to the intellectual – i.e. – issues about the size of the room and the sound system to more substantive ideas.

“Being in an Upper Room would be better.” (We were in the basement of the church.)

This is a comment related to the tradition that Jesus and the disciples met in an

“Upper Room.” Actually, this is kind of an interesting idea, although it may not always be practical.

“Perhaps some insight into what the Passover meant to Jesus and the disciples.”

“Thought it was wonderful.”

“A Seder Plate on each table.” (We didn’t do that for this event, but followed through on this suggestion for the Park Avenue event.)

Part II - Responses

1. *There were four cups of grape juice to drink during the Seder. Each was associated with a Biblical verse and a social justice concept. If you were designing this Seder, which of the following would you do? (Note: there were a number of different choices and responders were given the option of choosing more than one.)*

25 keep the cups the way they are 6 associate each cup with a Biblical personality

4 do something different with each cup

2. *In Part II of the Seder, we read and sang psalms. One of these was partially in Hebrew. 38 liked singing the Hebrew*

In Part II, we spoke briefly about the city of Jerusalem. Please comment about that inclusion in the Seder.

39 I thought that it was appropriate

Comments: I included this question because I wanted to see if there was any resistance to talking about Jerusalem. As it turned out, this was a non-issue. One person even said “It was politically inspired.” Several responders added, “Next year in Jerusalem.”

3. *What things in the Second Part of the Seder did you enjoy most? Please explain.*

A number of responders said that they liked the music. Other comments included:

“The Cup of Community.”

“Thinking of those not here who may need saving.”

“The Hebrew.”

“Involvement of the youth.”

4. *What things in the Second Part of the Seder did you ____ enjoy least ____not enjoy at all*

There were very few responses to this question. However, an issue that was mentioned a number of times was that there was some difficulty getting up and sitting down during the Seder because of space. (The room was filled to capacity and beyond.)

5. *Overall, how did you like the entire experience of the Last Supper Seder?*

39 I liked it

Comments: There were no negative responses to this question. Responses included:

“Loved it!”

“Interesting. Learned a lot.”

Well done.!”

“I enjoyed it so much that I didn’t mind that it ran a little long.”

6. *If you were creating this Seder, what are some things that you would not include?*

Comments: There were very few responses to this question. There were a couple of comments about the music, suggesting that less music might have been preferable.

7. *Of the musical selections that were sung in Part II, which did you enjoy most/least?*

Comments: There were very few responses to this question. Several people said that they liked singing Psalm 118 (the song in Hebrew.)

8. *Could you suggest other musical selections that you think should be included?*

Comment: This question elicited very few responses.

9. *If you were creating this Seder, which things would you change or do differently?*

Comments: There were a few practical suggestions.

“Add more Hebrew elements.”

“Hand mics for readers.”

“A little more direction on how much “wine” to put in each glass.”

10. How did you feel about the entire Seder from a spiritual perspective?

(Note: there were a number of choices. Participants had the option of choosing several answers.)

28 I felt spiritually moved in a good way 14 It generally made me feel positive 13
It made me feel hopeful 2 It made me want to get more involved in social action.

*11. The Last Super Seder is an attempt to help Christians feel closer to the events of the
Last Supper and its Passover roots.*

(Note: there were a number of choices. Participants had the option of choosing several answers.)

19 I think this goal was realized. 3 I don't think this goal was reached.

20 After experiencing this Seder, I understand the Last Supper more

3 After experiencing this Seder, my understanding of the Last Supper is
unchanged

12. This Seder was developed to be presented on Maundy Thursday.

(Note: there were a number of choices. Participants had the option of choosing several answers.)

19 This is a good program for Maundy Thursday

18 I would enjoy this experience at any time leading up to Easter

13. Did you enjoy the dinner?

36 yes

Comment: There were no negative remarks about the dinner, which was really excellent.

14. If this program was offered again, would you attend?

32 yes 0 no 3 maybe

Please add any comments you wish

Comments: In general, the comments were extremely positive. Some samples:

“Thank you and God Bless. I had a wonderful fulfilling time.”

“It was very good. I learned a lot and very spiritual.”

“Thank you for a most enjoyable evening. “

“Loved it all!”

“A great experience. Very ecumenical and positive.”

“A bit long; I would look to condense without losing content.”

“Very well done and written.”

“It offers a broader insight to our faith.”

“I liked the linkups pointing out Judaism as the root of Christianity.”

“Gives greater understanding of Jewish traditions and therefore gives greater reason to respect their traditions.”

Warwick – Welcome Sign



Table Set Up



Pastor Beth Lights the Candles



Rabbi David Explains the Shmura Matzah



Hand Washing Ritual



You Are Invited

A Last Supper Seder

The pleasure of your company is requested as my guest
at the presentation of my Doctor of Ministry Demonstration Project.

Thursday, April 1, 2010

6:45 pm

at

Park Avenue Christian Church

Park Avenue and 85th Street

New York City

Dinner will be served as part of the program, which will conclude at about 9 pm.

Please RSVP if you are able to attend, by Monday, March 22
to rabbijo@rabbijodavid.org or 212-249-0799.

Childcare and a child-friendly meal
will be provided for those who indicate such a need by March 22.

This is a participatory program. Guests will be asked to anonymously complete an evaluation document. The evening will be photographed and videotaped. If you prefer that your image not be recorded, please indicate this when you RSVP.

Please feel free to bring this event to the attention of others who would find it of interest.

Others should RSVP to 212-288-3246, ex 110—Nelly Perez or 106—Reverend Katherine Kinnamon, ext. 106. There is a \$10 suggested donation to cover the dinner for people over the age of 13. Payment can be made on the evening of the event.

The Project

The Last Supper Seder and Haggadah was developed by Rabbi Jo David, assisted by a team of Christian ministers and rabbis as a Doctor of Ministry project in conjunction with New York Theological Seminary. The purpose of this project is to give churches an appropriate liturgy and ritual for Maundy Thursday that will satisfy the spiritual needs of Christians to draw closer to the Last Supper while avoiding the inappropriate use of Jewish Passover Seder liturgy and rituals. The Last Supper Seder uses the broad outline of a Passover Seder as a framework for a new Christian ritual while providing an opportunity to explore the historical and scriptural basis of the events leading up to the Last Supper. The program will be facilitated by Park Avenue Christian Church's clergy and Rabbi Jo David.

Rabbi Jo David – Bio

Rabbi Jo David, based in New York City, has a “ministry without walls.” She has worked with Jews and non-Jews around the world as a congregational rabbi, life cycle officiant, interfaith and pastoral counselor, consultant to emerging Jewish communities, and as a “rabbi at sea” for various cruise lines.

Prior to her rabbinic career, Rabbi David was an award-winning advertising and public relations executive. A published author, she has written about subjects as diverse as Jewish genealogy, healing, liturgy, the Jewish life cycle, manners, archaeology, and food and wine. Her most recent article appears in the award-winning book, *Women and Judaism*, published by Praeger Press.

Ordained as a Rabbi in 1992 by the Academy for Jewish Religion, Rabbi David holds a Masters Degree in Judaic Studies from New York University, and a B.S. Degree in Film Studies of Jewish Life from Empire State College (SUNY). She is presently enrolled in the Doctor of Ministry in Multi-Faith Affairs program at New York Theological Seminary.

**Park Avenue Christian Church
Flyer for Publicity**

Come and Celebrate: A Last Supper Seder

Why is this night different from other nights?

On Maundy Thursday we usually mark the event of the Last Supper with a service in our sanctuary. This year, we are offering a new spiritual experience – a Last Supper Seder, a new ritual and liturgy with song, prayer, and food, created by Rabbi Jo David and a group of Christian and Jewish clergy including Reverend Alvin Jackson and Reverend Katherine Kinnamon. This new ritual and liturgy was developed to help us draw closer to the Passover background of the Last Supper. We will explore elements of the Jewish Passover Seder as we make new spiritual connections to this important event in the development of Christianity.

Date: Thursday, April 1, 2010

Place: Katherine: Please fill in

Time: 6:45 pm

Who: All people of all religions over the age of 13 are invited to attend.

Reservations: Please reserve your seat at the table by Monday, March 22.

A light dinner will be served as part of the celebration. A free will offering of \$10 will be requested to subsidize the cost of the dinner.

This program is being presented as part of a doctoral program through New York Theological Seminary. Those attending the Last Supper Seder will be asked to comment anonymously in writing on their experience during the event. This presentation will be filmed and photographed. If you do not wish to have your image used, please let us know when you make your reservation. A release form will be provided for all participants at the beginning of the program.

Park Avenue Christian Church
Newsletter Copy

MAUNDY THURSDAY - APRIL 1 AT 5:30 PM

Why is this night different from other nights?

Every year, on Maundy Thursday, we gather in our sanctuary to mark Jesus' last meal with his

disciples, before his arrest, trial and execution. This year, while remembering the new covenant ('Mandatum Novum') that Jesus gave as he broke bread and shared the cup, we will be marking Holy Thursday in a new way. You are invited to experience a different kind of liturgy –

a **Last Supper Seder**. Written by Rabbi Jo David, a doctoral candidate at New York Theological Seminary, this new liturgy was developed with the support of a team of Christian ministers, lay leaders, and other rabbis, "to help us draw closer to the Passover background of the Last Supper." It will be an evening for telling the Exodus story of bondage and liberation

which we share with our Jewish brothers and sisters. And in the midst of the Passover Seder we will have a time for remembering the new commandment given to us by the One who took on the role of a servant and washed his disciples' feet. Because there is a meal involved, as well as traditional Passover ritual foods, you will need to make a reservation. There is a \$10 per person suggested donation for anyone 13 and older. The deadline for reservations is March 22. Childcare will be available if requested by March 22. Please let us know the number of children and their ages. We will provide a simple meal for children 12 and under, and a place for them to play or engage in age-appropriate activities and crafts.

This promises to be a unique opportunity and a wonderful evening of fellowship and remembrance. Please plan to attend. Reservations: 212-288-3246, ex 110 – Nelly Perez or 106 – Katherine Kinnamon. Tickets can be paid for the night of the meal, but we would prefer that they be paid in advance, if possible. Special Note: There will be photography and filming during the evening. If you do not wish to have your image used, please let us know when you make your reservation.

Last Supper Seder Handout

Why is This Night Different From All Other Nights?

An Introduction to "A Last Supper Seder"

Presented at

Park Avenue Christian Church

New York City

Maundy Thursday, April 1, 2010

Facilitated by

Reverend Dr. Alvin O'Neal Jackson, Senior Pastor

Reverend Katherine Kinnamon, Associate Pastor

Paul Vasile, Minister of Music

Rabbi Jo David

This is a New York Theological Seminary

Doctor of Ministry Demonstration Project developed by Rabbi Jo David.

This project is based on material originally developed in cooperation
with Pastor Kimberly Wilson, Bethlehem Lutheran Church, Baldwin, New York.

Site Team

Reverend Dr. Alvin O'Neal Jackson

Rabbi Loraine Heller

James Gaynor

Liturgy Support Team

Reverend Beth Appel, Woodbury Union Church, Presbyterian, Warwick, RI

Reverend Christine Johnson Foster, Providence Presbyterian Church, Providence, RI

Frankco Harris, President, Frankco's Academy for Music Education, NY

Reverend Katherine Kinnamon, Associate Pastor, Park Avenue Christian Church, NY

Reverend Virginia McDaniel, United Church of Christ, Alachua, FL,

Reverend Thomas L. Schacher, First Presbyterian Church of East Hampton, NY

James Van Abbema, Editing and Web Support

Rabbi David would like to thank the Site Team
and the Liturgy Support Team for their friendship, mentoring, and guidance.

Special thanks to Neil H. Yerman, husband extraordinaire.

Thank you to the staff of Park Avenue Christian Church
for their help and assistance in presenting this program.

With appreciation for video services

Just Shoot Me Video, LLC, Larry Engler, Portland, CT.

A Last Supper Seder

A Liturgical Haggadah for Christian Churches

Introduction

“Why is this night different from all other nights?” (Traditional Passover Liturgy)

Why is this night different from other nights? Every year, on Maundy Thursday, we gather in our sanctuary to mark Jesus’ last meal with his disciples, the meal that took place in an Upper Room before his betrayal, arrest, trial and execution. This year, while remembering the new covenant (‘Mandatum Novum’) that Jesus gave as he broke bread and shared the cup, we will be marking Holy Thursday in a new way. You are invited to experience a different kind of liturgy – a Last Supper Seder . This is a re-thinking of the traditional Jewish Passover Seder and its relationship to the Last Supper.

What is Passover?

Passover is a springtime holiday described in the Book of Exodus.* Originally, Passover was a celebration of the spring barley harvest in Israel. Later on, it became associated with the exodus of the Israelites from Egypt. Passover is a seven day holiday in Israel, as mandated by the Book of Exodus, but is celebrated for eight days everywhere else. Passover is one of the most important holidays in the Jewish calendar.

There are many special rules of conduct associated with Passover. The most important rule is that Jews may not own or eat any products made of wheat, barley, rye, spelt, or oats during the holiday. This includes not only baked goods, but pasta, beer, and whiskey. Outside of Israel, a Seder is held on the first two nights of Passover.

Passover is a home-based ritual, and has the highest observance of any festival in the Jewish year. While there are also special worship services offered in Jewish synagogues (Jewish houses of worship) during the holiday period, the home-based Seder is the highpoint of the holiday.

Passover often falls at about the same time as Holy Week, as it does this year. This year, the first Seder falls Monday evening, March 29.

* Exodus 12:1-28

What is a Seder?

The word “Seder” is based on the Hebrew verb that means “order” – as in “an order or proper sequence” of a series of rituals. A Passover Seder is a ritual that has a very specific order. During the Seder, the story of the Israelites’ journey from slavery in Egypt to freedom is recounted. Some scholars believe that the Last Supper was a Seder, while others believe that the Last Supper took place on the night before the beginning of Passover.

All Jewish festivals begin in the evening. The Passover Seder takes place around a table, usually in a home, but sometimes in a synagogue or community center. There are various rituals, a special liturgy contained in a book called an “haggadah” (from the Hebrew word for “telling,” because a story is being told), and a dinner with foods especially associated with Passover.

What does the Passover Seder have to do with Jesus?

Jesus was Jewish, and was a rabbi. His work in first century Judea, like the work of all rabbis from ancient times to today, was to bring Jews closer to the authentic roots of their faith. When Jesus and his disciples entered Jerusalem for the last time, it was close to the time of Passover. There are many references throughout the New Testament that suggest that the Last Supper was a Passover Seder. Although some scholars disagree about whether the Last Supper took place on the night before the first Seder, or on the night of the first Seder itself, the ritual of the bread and the wine is suggestive of actions that take place in a Passover Seder.

Is the Jewish Passover Seder that is celebrated today the same as the Last Supper?

We don’t know exactly how Jews celebrated Passover at the time of Jesus. We assume that the directions given to the Israelites in Numbers 9:11, which mandate eating unleavened bread with the Passover sacrifice and bitter herbs were observed, as well as participation in the Pascal sacrifice that was performed in the Temple in Jerusalem.

At home, there may have been some sort of discussion about the meaning of the holiday. We know that there were Four Questions that might have been asked, since we have a record of the questions that were asked while the Temple was still in operation.

There are also four specific Biblical verses* that form the basis of a section of the Seder known as “The Four Sons” because these verses instruct a parent in how to teach a son about the meaning of Passover. These questions may have been asked as well, but we can’t be sure because we don’t have a written haggadah from this era.

What we can be certain about is that the Jewish Passover Seder that is celebrated today is very different from the Last Supper. The modern Haggadah, the book which is used for leading the Passover Seder, contains almost two thousand years of readings, rituals and prayers, most of which were unknown in Jesus’ time.

* Exodus 13:8; Exodus 13:14; Exodus 12:26-27; Deuteronomy 6:20-23.

Can someone who is not Jewish attend a Jewish Passover Seder?

Absolutely. Offering hospitality is an important element of the . However, someone who is not Jewish and is attending a Passover Seder should be aware that the liturgy is meant exclusively for people who are Jewish. The prayers, songs, and liturgy reflect Jewish law and Jewish spirituality.

The Last Supper took place on Maundy Thursday.

Is there a Passover Seder that Christians might celebrate during Holy Week?

The interest of churches to offer some sort of in commemoration of Maundy Thursday (Holy Thursday) was the genesis of this new Last Supper Seder. There have been many attempts to create a “Christian” Passover Seder by inserting Christian hymns or prayers in the name of Jesus into the Jewish framework. These efforts are not usually satisfying for Christians because the Jewish Seder reflects Jewish religious ideas and Jewish spirituality.

This new Last Supper Seder and Haggadah was developed by Rabbi Jo David, assisted by a team of ministers and rabbis as a Doctor of Ministry project in conjunction with New York Theological Seminary. The purpose of this new ritual and liturgy is to give churches an appropriate liturgy and ritual for Maundy Thursday that will satisfy the spiritual needs of Christians to draw closer to the Last Supper while learning about its Passover roots.

The Last Supper Seder uses the broad outline of a Jewish Passover Seder as a framework for a completely new Christian ritual. Many of the Jewish Passover Seder rituals have been deleted because they are not appropriate to the goal of creating a

Christian spiritual experience. Among these are the traditional first washing of hands without a prayer, and the singing of “Dayenu”, (It Would Have Been Enough) which lists specific things like the Jewish Sabbath that the Lord gave to the Israelites.

The prayers that appear here have been written to respond to Christian spiritual needs. However, appropriate aspects of the Passover Seder, like the partaking of bitter herbs and matzah, which are mandated in the Book of Numbers as part of the Passover celebration have been retained to provide “teaching moments” that will help participants understand the historical and scriptural background of the Last Supper.

What Will Happen During the Seder ?

The Seder will be facilitated by your minister/s and a rabbi. In addition, each participant will be asked to read from the haggadah that has been created for this event. We hope that you will also join in the group readings, the singing, performance of the various rituals, and the dinner, which is an important part of every Seder experience.

The Last Supper Seder, like the traditional Passover Seder, has two parts. The first part precedes the dinner. The second part follows the dinner. The most important thing is that you enjoy yourself.

Last Supper Seder Haggadah

A Last Supper Seder

65

Presented at

Park Avenue Christian Church

New York City
Maundy Thursday, April 1, 2010

Facilitated by

Reverend Dr. Alvin O'Neal Jackson, Senior Pastor
Reverend Katherine Kinnamon, Associate Pastor
Paul Vasile, Minister of Music
Rabbi Jo David

This is a New York Theological Seminary
Doctor of Ministry Demonstration Project developed by Rabbi Jo David.
This project is based on material originally developed in cooperation
with Pastor Kimberly Wilson, Bethlehem Lutheran Church, Baldwin, New York.

Site Team

Reverend Dr. Alvin O'Neal Jackson
Rabbi Loraine Heller
James Gaynor

Liturgy Support Team

Reverend Beth Appel, Woodbury Union Church, Presbyterian, Warwick, RI
Reverend Christine Johnson Foster, Providence Presbyterian Church, Providence, RI
Frankco Harris, President, Frankco's Academy for Music Education, NY
Reverend Katherine Kinnamon, Associate Pastor, Park Avenue Christian Church, NY
Reverend Virginia McDaniel, United Church of Christ, Alachua, FL,
Reverend Thomas L. Schacher, First Presbyterian Church of East Hampton, NY
James Van Abbema, Editing and Web Support

Rabbi David would like to thank the Site Team
and the Liturgy Support Team for their friendship, mentoring, and guidance.

Special thanks to Neil H. Yerman, husband extraordinaire.

Thank you to the staff of Park Avenue Christian Church
for their help and assistance in presenting this program.

With appreciation for video services
Just Shoot Me Video, LLC, Larry Engler, Portland, CT.

A Liturgical Haggadah for Christian Churches

A Last Supper Seder

Facilitated by

Reverend Dr. Alvin O'Neal Jackson, Senior Pastor

Reverend Katherine Kinnamon, Associate Pastor

Paul Vasile, Minister of Music

Rabbi Jo David

Pastor Jackson - Welcome

Rabbi David

The festival of Passover commemorates God's freeing of the Israelites from slavery in Egypt and their covenant with God at Mt. Sinai. The focus of the Passover celebration is the Seder, (SAY-der), a home-based ritual that has developed over a period of more than 3,000 years. The Jewish Seder is a ritual intended for people who are Jewish and has a liturgy that assumes that the celebrant is Jewish. The celebration of Passover by Jews today is very different from the Passover celebration during the time of Jesus.

Pastor Kinnamon

We know that Jesus was Jewish. During his life, he would have celebrated Passover many times. Christian scripture and belief links the Last Supper to the celebration of Passover. Scholars disagree as to whether the Last Supper was celebrated on the first night of Passover, or on the night prior to the first night of Passover.

Matthew 26 details the preparations for the Passover Seder undertaken by Jesus and his disciples. This information is also clearly described in Mark 14 and Luke 22 and alluded to in John 13. With such a strong scriptural basis, it is natural that Christians would be interested in knowing more about the Passover Seder and the Last Supper. This is how Matthew paints the scene.

"On the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread, the disciples came to Jesus and asked, 'Where do you want us to make preparations for you to eat the Passover?' He replied, 'Go into the city to a certain man and tell him, 'The Teacher says: My appointed time is near. I am going to celebrate the Passover with my disciples at your house.' So the disciples did as Jesus had directed them and prepared the Passover."

Matthew 26:17-19

Rabbi David

Today we will celebrate a new ritual with very old roots. This Last Supper Seder is a ritual that melds the historical and Biblical roots of the Passover Seder with modern Christian spiritual connections to the Last Supper. We have blended elements of the traditional Jewish Seder with modern Christian theology, liturgy, prayers, and music so that the ritual will speak to modern Christians.

A book called the "Haggadah" (ha-GAD-ah) is used to help the leader and the participants celebrate the Jewish Seder. The Hebrew word "haggadah," means "telling," or "story". Tonight we have a special Haggadah for our Last Supper Seder, which will make it possible for all of us to participate.

Pastor Jackson

The Jewish Seder is based on the Greco/Roman Banquet, which was popular in the land of Israel in the first centuries of the Common Era. For the rabbis, the Greco/Roman Banquet was the ultimate symbol of the way in which free people enjoyed themselves. Although the Jews in the first century C.E. were living under Roman rule, the Jews dreamt of a day when their Promised Land would be a true Jewish homeland under Jewish political control. Using the Greco/Roman Banquet as a model for the Seder was a way for Jews to say that they believed that their dream of political freedom in their Promised Land would one day come true.

The Greco/Roman Banquet was highly ritualized. Diners reclined on couches for their meal. Appetizers of raw vegetables were served at the beginning of the meal. These were dipped into salted water or vinegar. Drinking, singing, discussions and story telling were also part of the banquet. All these elements are found in the basic structure of the Passover Seder and in our Last Supper Seder.

Rabbi David

There are five basic themes in the Jewish Seder :

1. An acknowledgment of God's redemptive power;
2. The right to freedom for all people;
3. The importance of acting on behalf of those in need;
4. The imperative for all people to work to bring healing to the world;
5. The belief in a time when the world will be at peace.

Pastor Kinnamon

These themes come to us from our shared scriptural heritage – the Hebrew Bible, also known to Christians as the “Old Testament.” These universal themes are important to all people of faith and conscience. Tonight we celebrate these themes.

The Jewish Haggadah instructs participants to feel as though they themselves had participated in the Exodus from Egypt. As we begin our spiritual journey tonight, we pray that we may each feel this sense of direct experience and understanding.

Candle Lighting**Rabbi David**

Every Jewish festival begins with the lighting of at least two candles. On Passover, candles are lit in the evening before the Seder begins. For Jews, the lighting of candles shows that sacred time has begun. The lit candles also symbolize god's presence in our midst. The association of fire and god's presence is an idea that Christians and Jews share.

The candles are lit.

Pastor Jackson

Tonight we light three candles as we begin our Last Supper Seder . The first candle represents Judaism, the original source of the ritual we will perform tonight. The second candle represents Christianity, our sacred faith. The third candle represents the Last Supper Seder, this special ceremony that we will experience this evening.

Friends, let us pray:

Together

Almighty God, may these candles illuminate my heart and bring me nearer to you. May this Last Supper Seder kindle within me a renewed passion for doing your work in the world. Just as you led the ancient Israelites out of slavery to freedom, may you lead me away from those things that enslave me so that I may be free to serve you with a whole heart. Help me accept your teaching, “As I go forward, step by step, the way will be opened up for me.*” Amen. *Proverbs 4:12

Pastor Jackson

As we begin this special evening, let us become a community by greeting one another, exchanging a sign of God's peace by saying, "The peace of the Lord be with you," or "Shalom," which is the Hebrew word for peace and wholeness.

The leader begins this ritual.

Introduction to the Four Cups of the Fruit of the Vine

Rabbi David

Tonight we will share four cups of grape juice, the fruit of the vine, during our celebration. In the Jewish tradition, drinking wine or grape juice is an expression of joy. In a Jewish Seder, a phrase from Exodus 6:6-7 is linked to each cup. Each of these phrases relates to God's agency in freeing the Israelites from slavery in Egypt.

Reader

Cup 1 - "I will **free** you from the labors of the Egyptians (Ex. 6:6)

Cup 2 - And **deliver you from their bondage**. (Ex. 6:6)

Cup 3 - I will **redeem** you with an outstretched arm and through extraordinary measures. (Ex. 6:6)

Cup 4 - I will **take you to be My people**, and I will be your God. (Ex. 6:7)

Rabbi David

For our Last Supper Seder, we will dedicate each cup to a specific social, ethical, spiritual, or moral ideal. As we prepare to celebrate the Cup of Freedom, please add some grape juice to your cup. When you drink it, please make sure to leave some juice in your cup for a ritual we will perform in a little while.

The first cup is filled with grape juice.

The First Cup – The Cup of Freedom and New Beginnings

Reader

The Cup of Freedom is dedicated to the concept of New Beginnings. We live in a country where the freedom to practice one's religion is a sacred right, not a privilege to be granted by a ruler's whim. In Jerusalem, at the time of the Last Supper, religious freedom did not exist. Religious leaders like Jesus were seen as dangerous people who wished to overthrow Roman rule. Throughout history, many people who were fighters for freedom and justice were killed by those who wished to maintain their own power and authority.

Reader

Today, as we celebrate this Last Supper Seder, we turn our thoughts to the concept of new beginnings. New beginnings require a recommitment to our highest values and most sacred ideals; we honor our past, we acknowledge our present, we look forward with hope and faith to the future. God promised the Israelites: "I will **free** you from the labors of the Egyptians."*

*Ex. 6:6

Together

We give thanks for the gift of religious freedom.

Pastor Kinnamon

When Jesus began his Last Supper, he offered a cup to his disciples and said to them, "Take this, all of you, and drink from it."*

*Luke 22:17

Together

We give thanks for the freedom to examine our religious traditions and for finding new ways to embrace our heritage and religious teachings.

Pastor Kinnamon

Let us pray together. Please stand and raise your cup.

All rise and raise their cups..

Together

We give thanks to You, Creator of all things, for the fruit of the vine. In Your infinite wisdom, You have graced us with religious freedom, and with the privilege of fully exploring our religious traditions. May we be blessed to embrace these gifts, and to use them to join with You in bringing healing and peace to the world.

Amen.

All drink, and are then seated.

Pastor Kinnamon

Let us sing together.

Together – This is a Day of New Beginnings

Words and music are on the next page.

This Is a Day of New Beginnings

Unison

1. This is a day of new be - gin - nings,
 2. For by the life and death of Je - sus,
 3. Then let us, with the Spir - it's dar - ing,
 4. In faith we gath - er round the ta - ble

time to re - mem - ber and move on,
 God's might - y Spir - it, now as then,
 step from the past and leave be - hind
 to taste and share what love can do.

time to be - lieve what love is bring - ing,
 can make for us a world of dif - ference,
 our dis - ap - point - ment, guilt, and griev - ing,
 This is a day of new be - gin - nings;

lay - ing to rest the pain that's gone.
 as faith and hope are born a - gain.
 seek - ing new paths, and sure to find.
 our God is mak - ing all things new.

The Parsley and its Symbolism

Rabbi David

At a traditional Jewish Seder, a sprig of parsley is now dipped into salted water, a blessing is said and the parsley is eaten. This is reminiscent of the Greco/Roman custom of dipping vegetables in salt water or vinegar. These were eaten as appetizers.

The parsley symbolizes the promise of new life that is brought about by the coming of the spring. The salt water symbolizes the sweat of the Israelites as they built the store houses of Pithom and Rameses II and the tears that they shed during their enslavement in Egypt. When the parsley and salt water are eaten, they remind us that new beginnings, like the new life of freedom that the Israelites longed for, are often built on a foundation of hard work, sweat and tears.

Reader

This Last Supper Celebration that we share tonight is also a new beginning for us. We show our respect for the religious traditions of the Jewish people by understanding that the prayers and rituals sacred to them are their precious heritage. We show respect for ourselves and our religious traditions by seeking to find new and appropriate ways of expressing our spiritual need to draw close to the Last Supper and the early historical beginnings of our faith.

Reader

The parsley reminds us that the religious creative spirit is an ever-renewing source of blessing for us and for all the world.

Reader

The salt water reminds us of the tears that should be shed by all people of faith for the religious wars that have damaged and still damage individuals, communities and entire nations.

Pastor Jackson

We are going to pray for renewal. After the prayer, please dip a piece of parsley in the salt water, and then eat the parsley. Let us pray:

Together

Gracious God, you are the Source of new life and hope. We thank you for the foods that grow in the earth and nourish us. Please help us to remember that you are a loving God to all your creations. Grant that we may be messengers of hope and renewal in our daily lives, for ourselves, for our church and for our community. Amen.

Dip the parsley in salt water and eat it.

The Breaking Of The Middle Matzah**Rabbi David** (*Hold up a piece of matzah*)

This is a piece of matzah. It is bread that is made without yeast, so it is unleavened. Matzah is made and eaten all year long. However, only matzah made for Passover may be eaten by Jews during the Passover festival. Exodus 12:39 explains, "With the dough they had brought from Egypt, they baked cakes of unleavened bread. The dough was without yeast because they had been driven out of Egypt and did not have time to prepare food for themselves."

Reader

Matzah for Passover must be specially prepared. All the utensils and even the ovens in which it is baked must be thoroughly cleaned to make sure that there is no left over flour or old matzah present. To make Passover matzah, ground flour that has been carefully guarded so that no water or wild yeast can affect it, is mixed with water, rolled flat, and baked for no longer than 18 minutes. It is then packed in a box that is marked "kosher for Passover".

Reader

During the eight days of Passover, observant Jews do not eat anything that is made with regular flour. Only foods like baked goods made with Passover matzah flour are permitted. Regular pasta is not eaten, and Jews from Eastern European backgrounds do not eat rice or legumes.

Rabbi David

In a traditional Jewish Seder, there are three special matzahs on the table in front of the leader. The middle of three matzahs is broken, and half of the matzah is set aside as the Afikomen, (Af-ee-KOH-men), a Greek word that means "dessert." Later, while dinner is being eaten, the Afikomen is hidden. Near the end of dinner, the children search for the Afikomen. It must be found and redeemed in order for the Seder to come to a conclusion. Gifts of small toys, money and candy are traditional currency used to redeem the Afikomen. Once the Afikomen is redeemed, it is distributed and everyone is given a little piece to eat. Now I'm going to break the middle matzah.

Break the middle matzah and put one half aside to hide during dinner.

Pastor Kinnamon

Tonight as we break the middle matzah and hide the Afikomen, we remember that Jesus told the parable of the Lost Sheep in which the Good Shepherd searches for and finds the one sheep that was lost. When our community is broken, God comes to search out the ones who are alienated in order to restore our unity. It is also our responsibility to be mindful of those in our community who have gone astray and need our help, love and support.

During difficult times, such as those we are currently experiencing, it is even more critical to be aware of the health and wellbeing of all the people we know and love. In addition, special sensitivity and awareness needs to be cultivated so that we can mitigate the suffering of those who are most vulnerable in our society.

Jesus reflected the rabbinical tradition of which he was a part when he taught, "There will be more rejoicing in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous people who have no need to repent."* In a real way, our celebration is not fulfilled and our community is not complete until that which is lost has been found. *Luke 15:7

Telling The Story Of The Exodus From Egypt – The Four Questions**Rabbi David**

The telling of the story of the Israelites' journey from slavery to freedom is the central focus of the traditional Passover Seder. The story is told in a variety of ways. The first is in the form of a Question and Answer dialogue called, "The Four Questions." The four questions in a Jewish Haggadah deal with specific ritual foods and actions that are unique to the Passover Seder. These are the Jewish Four Questions.

Reader

Why is this night different from all other nights?

Q1 On all other nights we eat hametz (hah-MAYTZ) or matzah. On this night we eat only matzah.

Q2 On all other nights we eat any type of herbs. On this night, we eat bitter herbs.

Q3 On all other nights we do not dip even once. On this night, we dip twice.

Q4 On all other nights we eat sitting or reclining. On this night we recline.

Reader

What do these questions mean? In the first question, the word "hametz" (hah-MAYTZ) is a Hebrew word that means "leavened bread." In the Biblical Book of Exodus, God tells the Israelites that during Passover they must abstain from eating leavened foods for seven days.* Outside of the land of Israel, Jews celebrate Passover for eight days and eat matzah for eight days for reasons having to do with the Jewish calendar. The act of abstaining from eating regular bread and eating matzah instead is performed in memory of the Exodus from Egypt, when the Israelites' dough did not have time to rise.

*Exodus 13:6-7

Reader

The second question asks about herbs. We have already eaten parsley, which is considered a bitter herb. A little later, we will eat some horseradish, which is also bitter. The eating of these herbs is a reminder of the bitterness of the slavery of the Israelites when they lived in Egypt.

Reader

The third question asks about dipping. The dipping refers to the dipping of parsley in salt water and the dipping of a piece of horseradish in charoset, (ha-ROW-set) a sweet nut and fruit mixture that we will taste in a little while.

Reader

The fourth question that we just read is not one of the original four questions. At the time that Jesus lived, there was a different question. In Jesus' time, the Temple in Jerusalem was still operating as a religious center for the Israelite religion. Animal sacrifices were regularly brought to the Temple. For Passover, an offering of a lamb was mandatory. During the time of Jesus, the fourth question was, "On other nights, we eat meat roasted, stewed or baked. Why on this night do we only eat roasted meat?"

Reader

Israelites ate only roasted meat (usually lamb) on the night of the Seder because the Book of Exodus mandated roasted meat for first night of Passover.* In addition, these verses require that the meat be eaten with bitter herbs and unleavened bread.

After the Temple in Jerusalem was destroyed by the Romans in 70 C.E., the Jews were no longer able to sacrifice the Pascal lamb. It was at about this time that the fourth question was changed to the one that is used today. *Exodus 10: 8-10

Reader

The new question refers to the custom of relaxing in a chair during the Seder. Most often this custom is practiced by the leader of the Seder. The leader sits in an armchair and rests his or her left forearm on a pillow, leaning back in the chair and slightly to the left. This posture is reminiscent of the way in which Roman and Greek nobles relaxed on sofas when they participated in festive meals. The Romans of the first century were the "free" people in Jerusalem. By incorporating this custom into the Seder, the rabbis, who structured the early rituals, were sending the message that everyone who attends a Seder is a free person, not a slave.

Reader

We get a glimpse of this tradition when we read Matthew's description of the Last Supper. "The disciples did as Jesus had directed them and prepared the Passover. When evening came, *Jesus was reclining at the table with the Twelve, and while they were eating* he said, 'I tell you the truth, one of you will betray me.'"

*Matthew 26:19-21

Pastor Jackson

Our Last Supper Celebration needs its own four questions in order to focus on the special nature of this evening.

Why is this night different from all other nights?

Together

On all other nights, we recite words of holiness steeped in tradition. On this night we celebrate a new liturgy and ritual.

Pastor Jackson

On all other nights we tell stories in the voices of the past, or speak of matters of concern in the present.

Together

On this night, we blend ancient and modern words, stories, values and ideals.

Pastor Jackson

On all other nights, we expect our religious institutions to make us feel spiritual.

Together

On this night, we take responsibility for our own spiritual seeking.

Pastor Jackson

On all other nights, Jewish rituals are not part of our spiritual life.

Together

On this night, we study the Jewish religious and historical background of the Last Supper, seeking to incorporate new insights into a deeper sense of Christian spiritual awareness.

Narrative Story Telling

Rabbi David

Another way of relating the story of the journey from slavery to freedom is through narrative story telling and song. Our story begins in Egypt with Moses and the Children of Israel. The Israelites were slaves to Pharaoh. They toiled under terrible conditions, building storehouses to hold Pharaoh's wealth. The Israelites cried out to God for help. God heard their cries of distress and told Moses to go to Pharaoh and tell Pharaoh to let the Israelites go free. Pharaoh refused Moses' request. God sent 10 plagues against Pharaoh.

"And the Lord spoke to Moses, 'Go to Pharaoh, and say to him, 'thus says the Lord, Let my people go, that they may serve me.'" Exodus 8:1

Together we sing a spiritual that describes these events.

Together: Let My People Go

Traditional Spiritual

When Israel was in Egypt's Land, Let my people go,
Oppressed so hard they could not stand, Let my people go.

Chorus

*Go down, Moses, way down in Egypt's Land.
Tell ol' Pharaoh, "Let my people go."*

Thus saith the Lord, bold Moses said, Let my people go,
If not, I'll smite your first-born dead, Let my people go.

Chorus

The Lord told Moses what to do, Let my people go,
To lead the Hebrew children through, Let my people go.

Chorus

O come along Moses, you'll not get lost, Let my people go,
Stretch out your rod and come across, Let my people go.

Chorus

As Israel stood by the waterside, Let my people go,
At God's command it did divide, Let my people go.

Chorus

When they reached the other shore, Let my people go,
They sang a song of triumph o'er, Let my people go.

Chorus

Rabbi David

Many Egyptians suffered and died because of the plagues. Although we rejoice that the Israelites were finally freed from slavery, we mourn for those who suffered and died. In memory of the death of the first born of Egypt, first born Jews fast on the day leading up to the first night of Passover.

We remember that Jewish tradition teaches that each person at a Seder should feel as though he or she personally experienced the redemption from Egypt. To demonstrate that personal sense of freedom and a personal concern for the Egyptians who died and for their families who mourned them, Jewish tradition instructs us to remove ten drops of sweetness from our cups as we recite the catalogue of the Biblical ten plagues.

As we read each plague, we use the tip of our pinky finger to remove a drop of grape juice from our cup (*demonstrate*) and we put the drop on the side of our plate. We read together as we perform this ritual.

Place a drop of the grape juice on your plate after you read the name of the plague.

Together

1. The Nile turned blood red.
2. Frogs overran the banks of all bodies of water and invaded the land of Egypt.
3. Lice infested all living creatures.
4. Swarms of insects flew across the land, stinging and biting all living things.
5. All the cattle died of a mysterious disease.
6. People mysteriously broke out in boils.
7. Hail as big as baseballs fell over the land.
8. Locusts swarmed over the land, devouring all the crops.
9. Darkness descended over the land, so that one could not tell day from night.
10. Death came to all the first-born of Egypt.

Pastor Kinnamon

There are also plagues that afflict our world today. We remove another ten drops of sweetness as we recite ten plagues that affect us and our world.

Together

1. The waging of war;
2. Religious intolerance;
3. Cynicism and lack of hope;
4. Disregard for our own true needs and feelings;
5. Callous disregard for the feelings of others;
6. Inadequate support for our houses of worship and religious institutions;
7. Exploitation of those in our society who are weak or vulnerable;
8. Judging others according to age, gender, gender orientation, appearance, religion, race, or national origin;
9. Acceptance of violence and negative messages in the media;
10. Pollution of our planet.

Pastor Kinnamon

Our story continues with the account from the Book of Exodus. The 10th plague was the death of the firstborn of all but the Israelites.

Reader

“And it came to pass, that at midnight the Lord slew all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, including the firstborn of Pharaoh. A great wailing arose in Egypt, for there was not a house where there was not someone who had died. Pharaoh called for Moses and Aaron in the dead of night and said to them, “Go from this land! Go! Serve this Lord, as you have said.”*

*Exodus 12:29-31

Reader

The Israelites baked unleavened cakes of dough, for there was no time for the bread to rise and they hurried and left Egypt as quickly as possible. God created a pillar of fire to guide them at night and a pillar of cloud to guide them during the day.

But after the Israelites had left their homes and had started on their journey, Pharaoh forgot the pain of the loss of his firstborn and sent his army and his chariots to pursue the Israelites and to bring them back to be his slaves.

Reader

When the Israelites were camped by the shores of the Reed Sea, they saw that the chariots were pursuing them and they called out to God in terror and distress. And the Lord parted the waters of the sea and the Israelites crossed over to the other shore on dry land.

Reader

When the chariots saw the path through the water, they tried to follow the Israelites. But the water closed over them, drowning them and saving the Israelites.

Miriam the Prophetess, sister of Moses and Aaron, led the women in sacred song and dance to praise the Lord and to give thanks for their deliverance from the hand of Pharaoh and from the shackles of slavery.

Reader

All too often, our histories ignore the contributions of women who struggled to create a better life for themselves, their families, and their communities.

Together

In this sacred moment, we give thanks for the women of all religions and cultures throughout the ages, most of whom had lives that were undocumented. Some of these women have names that are known to us, but most are anonymous. One woman who was not unknown was Mary, the mother of Jesus.

Reader

In about the year 1 C.E., a baby was born to Mary in a stable in the town of Bethlehem. Jesus grew and became strong, increasing in wisdom. The grace of God was upon him.

Jesus became a rabbi – a teacher – and taught people about God, drawing them closer to their sacred Jewish heritage. Jesus healed those who were sick and performed many miracles. In doing so, he attracted many disciples, some of whom traveled with him through the land of Judea.

In 30 C.E., Jesus went to Jerusalem with his disciples for the festival of Passover. The New Testament seems to indicate that the Last Supper was a celebration of Passover,* although some scholars believe that the Last Supper occurred the night before the first night of Passover.

*Matthew 26:17-19; Mark 14:12-16; Luke 22:7-13

Reader

Whether it was a regular dinner or a Passover Seder, we know that in an upper room, Jesus celebrated the Last Supper with his disciples. If it was Passover, it is likely that he and the disciples ate pieces of the roasted Pascal lamb with bitter herbs and unleavened bread, as the Bible commands. The Gospel accounts give different descriptions of the meal, the rituals, and the discussions that took place.

*Exodus 12:8

Reader

While Jesus and the disciples were eating, Jesus said, “‘I tell you the truth, one of you will betray me.’ They (the disciples) were very sad and began to say to him one after the other, ‘Surely not I, Lord?’ Jesus replied, ‘The one who has dipped his hand into the bowl with me will betray me.’ Then Judas, the one who would betray him said, ‘Surely not I, Rabbi?’ Jesus answered, ‘Yes, it is you.’”

*Matthew 26:21-23;25

Reader

The term “Maundy” as in Maundy Thursday is derived from the Latin word *mandatum*, which is the Vulgate's translation of the word “commandment” in John 13: 34: “A new commandment I give to you...”

Jesus washed the feet of the disciples as a sign of their commission for the sacred tasks ahead of them. He gave them a new commandment.

Together

"Love one another. As I have loved you, so must you love one another." John 13:34

Reader

Jesus took bread and after blessing it, he broke it, as we broke the matzah earlier, and gave it to the disciples. He said to them, "Take and eat; this is my body." Then Jesus took the cup of wine and after giving thanks, he gave it to them saying, "Drink from it all of you; for this is my blood of the new covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins."*

*Matthew 26:26-27

Reader

After they had sung a hymn, (which is a traditional part of a Passover Seder,) they went out to the Mount of Olives, and then to Gethsemane, where Jesus prayed. Jesus, who was betrayed by Judas, was arrested, tried, condemned to death, and crucified. He was buried in a new tomb, and a large stone was used to seal the opening. After the Sabbath, God raised Jesus from the dead. We celebrate Jesus' resurrection on Easter Sunday* *Matthew 26:30-44

Pastor Jackson

Let us sing together.

An Upper Room Did Our Lord Prepare

The musical score is written for three parts: Soprano (S), Alto (A), and Bass (B). It is in the key of D major (indicated by two sharps) and 3/4 time. The melody is primarily in the Soprano part, with the Alto and Bass parts providing harmonic support. The lyrics are written below the notes, with some words in italics. The score is divided into three systems, each with four lines of music. The lyrics are as follows:

1. An up - per room did our Lord pre - pare for those he
2. A last - ing gift Je - sus gave his own: to share his
3. And af - ter sup - per he washed their feet; for ser - vice,
4. No end there is! We de - part in peace, he loves be -

loved un - til the end: and his dis - ci - ples still
bread, his lov - ing cup. What - ev - er bur - dens may
too, is sac - ra - ment. In Christ our joy shall be
yond the ut - ter - most: in ev - ery room in our

gath - er there to cel - e - brate their ris - en friend.
bow us down, he by his cross shall lift us up.
made com - plete: sent out to serve, as he was sent.
Fa - ther's house Christ will be there, as Lord and Host.

The Second Cup: Redemption From Bondage – Intentional Living

Fill the glasses with grape juice.

Pastor Jackson

God's second promise to the Israelites was that God would "deliver you from their bondage."* The bondage from which God delivered the Israelites was the bondage of slavery. When one is a slave, one has no ability to direct even the simplest aspects of one's daily life. For a slave, the attempt to live a self-determined life can easily result in death.

Even those who are not literally enslaved may still be held in bondage by destructive habits. It is easy to understand how drugs, alcohol, gambling, and even sex can be destructive addictions that can enslave an individual.

It is less common for us to recognize more subtle ways of thinking and behaving that keep us from living the kind of life that would make us happy. * Ex. 6:6

Reader

What is our normal way of living? Most of the time we live our lives by rote, following the paths encouraged by ingrained habits and comfortable ways of doing things. We rarely take the time to evaluate our feelings and our actions, to wonder if we could be leading life in a more productive and healthy way.

Reader

Intentional Living is about being willing to make each moment count. When every breath we take is imbued with the desire to help to heal the world through our God-given gifts, we are leading an intentional life. When we live each day with the intention of making the world a better place, we accept our role as God's partner in healing the world. When we wake up to the tremendous power each of us has to bring justice, sweetness, and healing to the world through our intentional awareness and actions, we can create miracles in the world.

Reader

How can we lead an intentional life? Jesus taught that everything that we have is a gift from God. The words of I Thessalonians offer some advice: "Do not put out the Spirit's fire; do not treat prophecies with contempt. Test everything. Hold onto the good. Avoid every kind of evil."*

*I Thessalonians 5:19-22

Pastor Jackson

The second cup of our celebration is dedicated to the concept of Intentional Living. Let us lift our cups and pray together:

All rise and lift glasses.

Together:

Holy One, Blessed Parent, I give thanks for the gift of life which you have granted me. Help me to use my talents and abilities with kindness, courage, and faith. Help me to understand how best to serve you. May the work of my hands help to fashion a better world for all your creatures. Amen.

All drink and are seated.

Explaining The Foods On The Seder Plate

Rabbi David

The traditional Jewish Seder plate holds samples of the foods that are used during the Seder ritual. Over time, alternate food traditions have been added or substituted for various reasons. As we look at and discuss the traditional meanings of these ritual foods, we will also reflect on their special meaning for us.

What is the meaning of the Parsley?

Reader

In the Jewish tradition, the parsley is a reminder of spring and of the miracle of the renewal of life. For Christians, the parsley can also symbolize the on going cycle of life, death, and rebirth that is part of our human condition. The parsley also reminds us of the resurrection of Jesus after his death on the cross.

Rabbi David

What is the meaning of the Bitter Herb?

Reader

In Jewish tradition, the bitter herb, which is usually horseradish, is a reminder of the bitterness of slavery that the Israelites experienced under the yoke of the Egyptians.

For Christians, the horseradish is a reminder of Jesus' pain and suffering. We also reflect on all those who suffer in the world and understand that we are called to a life of service to help relieve that suffering.

Rabbi David

What is the meaning of the Charoset?

Reader

In the Jewish tradition, the chunky texture of the charoset is a reminder of the bricks and mortar the Israelites used to build the storehouses of the Pharaoh.

For Christians, the charoset may remind us of the complexity of Jesus' experience as he approached the cross, the intermingling of his physical agony and his spiritual joy in fulfilling God's plan for him and for us.

Rabbi David

What is the meaning of the Green Vegetable?

Reader

In the Jewish tradition, the green vegetable, usually celery or romaine lettuce is a reminder of God's goodness to us in feeding us through the fertility of the earth.

For Christians, the green vegetable is a reminder of our duty to be good stewards of the earth, so that the earth will continue to provide for us. This is an idea that both Jews and Christians share.

Rabbi David

What is the meaning of the Roasted Lamb Shank bone?

Reader

In the Jewish tradition, the roasted lamb shank bone is a reminder of the Paschal offering that was brought to the Temple in celebration of the Passover ritual described in the Book of Exodus. The loss of the Temple in 70 C.E. is still recalled with bitterness and regret by many Jews. For this reason, at a traditional Seder it is the custom not to point to the bone while discussing its meaning.

Reader

For Christians, the lamb shank bone is a reminder that when John saw Jesus coming to him, John said, "Behold the Lamb of God which takes away the sin of the world."* It also reminds us that Jesus lived during the time when the Paschal sacrifice was still being offered in the Temple in Jerusalem and that Jesus and his followers were part of the Jewish community. *John 1:29

Rabbi David

What is the meaning of the Beet?

Reader

There is a Jewish teaching that the beet can be substituted for the shank bone, especially if one is a vegetarian. We include it on our Seder plate tonight to indicate that all people are welcome at our table.

Rabbi David

What is the meaning of the Roasted Egg?

Reader

In the Jewish tradition, the roasted egg is a symbol of the special festival offering that was brought to the Temple in Jerusalem. It also symbolizes the eternal cycles of life, death and rebirth. For Christians, the roasted egg is a reminder of the Easter egg, a symbol of new life and resurrection.

Hand Washing Ritual**Pastor Kinnamon**

In traditional Judaism, the ritual hand washing takes place before one eats bread. This ceremony is a carryover from the ritual that the priests performed in the Temple in Jerusalem before the bread offering. In a traditional Jewish Seder, there are two different hand washing rituals. The first comes right after the drinking of the first cup of wine before eating the parsley. The second hand washing comes right before the eating of the matzah and is accompanied by a blessing.

Reader

In some Christian traditions, the ritual washing of hands still takes place, either by individuals entering the church, or by those officiating in the Communion Service. The rite is called, "lavabo" from the Latin meaning "washing."

Many ancient churches were built with a large fountain in the courtyard. It was the tradition for Christians to wash before entering the church for worship. Many religions have rituals that require ritual hand washing prior to the performance of prayer or other ritual acts.

Reader

Foot washing was part of the Last Supper, according to John's gospel. "The evening meal was being served, and the devil had already prompted Judas Iscariot, son of Simon, to betray Jesus. Jesus knew that the Father had put all things under his power, and that he had come from God and was returning to God; so he got up from the meal, took off his outer clothing, and wrapped a towel around his waist. After that, he poured water into a basin and began to wash his disciples' feet, drying them with the towel that was wrapped around him.*

*John 13:2-5

Reader

On the evening of the Last Supper, Jesus washed the feet of the disciples as a sign of their commission for the sacred tasks ahead of them.* Jesus said, "The greatest among you should be like the least, and the one who rules as the one who serves." **

* John 22:24-27 ** Luke 22:26

Pastor Kinnamon

Tonight we will wash one another's hands as we remember Jesus' example of servant hood, and also reflect on our connection with all people. If you don't know the person whose hands you will be washing, please introduce yourself.

For the hand washing, hold your hands over the empty bowl as another person pours water over your hands. Then dry your hands with the napkin provided for this purpose. After your hands have been washed, please perform the same service for the person who ministered to you.

Pause for hand washing ritual.

Blessing Over The Matzah

Rabbi David

Before every meal in which bread is served, Jewish tradition requires that a blessing for the bread be offered. In a traditional Jewish Seder, two blessings are said at this point. The first is for bread itself, even though leavened bread is not served. The unleavened bread is the substitute. Then a special blessing for the commandment to eat matzah is offered.

Reader

In Biblical days, bread was the center of every meal. To invite a stranger to share the bread of the household was the greatest sign of hospitality. Breaking bread together was the standard method of establishing ties of kinship. Our English word “companion” literally means “one who shares bread.” The matzah that we eat tonight is probably the same kind of bread that Jesus would have blessed and broken at the Last Supper if he and the disciples were celebrating the Seder.

Together

“Now as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed and broke it and gave it to the disciples and said, ‘Take, eat, for this is my body.’” * Matthew 26:26

Rabbi David

Together we offer a blessing for food and companionship.

Hold up the plate of matzah.

Together

We give thanks to the Creator, who brings forth nourishment from the earth. In your great wisdom, you have brought us together this night to celebrate a Last Supper Seder. May it be your will that we will find both spiritual and physical nourishment at this table. Amen.

Everyone takes a piece of matzah, breaks off a piece and eats it.

Rabbi David

We now take a piece of horseradish root and combine it with some charoset. This is the “second dipping” referred to in the Jewish Seder’s four questions. The sharp and sweet tastes combine to remind us that life’s sweetness can sometimes be reduced, and that experiences that are bitter can often be sweetened through love, caring, work, faith and prayer. As we eat the horseradish and haroset together, we reflect on the verse “Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing.”*

*Romans 15:13

All eat the horseradish and charoset.

Dinner Is Served

The Seder Continues

Redemption of the Afikomen

Rabbi David

It is time to redeem the Afikomen. We share the afikomen as we reflect quietly on our personal needs for God's redemptive blessing.

Redeem afikomen and distribute to participants.

Blessing After the Meal

Pastor Jackson

At this point in a traditional Jewish Seder, a grace after the meals is recited or sung. We are grateful for God's bounty. With a deep appreciation for that with which God has blessed us, we offer these words of thanksgiving based on the traditional Jewish blessing after the conclusion of a meal.

Together

Blessed are You, Lord our God, sovereign of the universe who sustains the whole world with goodness, kindness and mercy. You give food to all creatures, for your mercy endures forever. Through your abundant goodness, we have been nourished and our hunger appeased; may we never be in want of sustenance.

We give thanks not only for this food, but for all the things with which you have blessed us. O Merciful one, please send abundant blessings to this House of God in which we sit, to all who serve it, to those who support it, to all who have helped to offer this Last Supper Seder, to those who have participated in preparing and serving this meal, to all who have partaken of it, and to all our friends and loved ones.

Bless those in our community who are not with us tonight and all who are in need of your caring love and support. Grant peace to us and to all the world.

Blessed are You, Holy One, who loves us, watches over us, and gives us courage and strength. Amen.

Hallel – Singing Psalms of Praise and Thanks To God

Rabbi David

Earlier this evening, in recounting the events of the Last Supper, we read Matthew's description of Jesus and the disciples singing a hymn before ending the meal and going to the Mount of Olives.* One of the Passover customs that we know existed during Jesus' lifetime was the singing of Psalms 113-118, by the priests in the Temple during the time that the Passover sacrifice was being offered. The singing of these hymns was incorporated into the home-based Seder, and into worship services during Passover after the destruction of the Temple. While we can't say with certainty that Jesus and the disciples were singing these specific psalms, the passage from Matthew is certainly suggestive.

In a Jewish Passover Seder, psalms would be read and sung at this point in the evening. We honor God, the Jewish roots of our faith, and our shared scriptures now with the reading and singing of some of these psalms. We read Psalm 114 together.

*Matthew 26:30-44

Together

When Israel came out of Egypt,
the house of Jacob from a people of foreign tongue,
Judah became God's sanctuary, Israel his dominion.
The sea looked and fled, the Jordan turned back;
the mountains skipped like rams, the hills like lambs.
Why was it, O sea, that you fled, O Jordan, that you turned back,
you mountains, that you skipped like rams, you hills, like lambs?

Tremble, O earth, at the presence of the Lord,
at the presence of the God of Jacob, who turned the rock into a pool,
the hard rock into springs of water.
Psalm 114

Rabbi David

Let us sing this verse from Psalm 118.

Together - Min HaMeitzar – Out of the Depths

Min ha-mei-tzar ka-ra-ti Yah *Out of the depths, I called out to God,*
A-nani va-mer-chav Yah. *God answered me and brought me relief.*
Min ha-mei-tzar ka-ra-ti Yah
A-nani va-mer-chav Yah.
A-nani A-nani
A -nani va-mer-chav Yah
A-nani A-nani
A -nani va-mer-chav Yah.
Text: Psalm 118:5 Musical Setting: Baruch Chait

The Third Cup: The Cup of Redemption and the Gift of Diversity

Pastor Kinnamon

God promised the Israelites: “I will redeem you with an outstretched arm and through extraordinary measures.”*

When we reach out with a whole heart to people who are different from ourselves, we help to heal the world. We remember the words of Matthew: “Judge not that ye be not judged.”**

When we celebrate diversity, we acknowledge that all people, all cultures, and all traditions that seek to create peace are as valid as our own. We do not label them as “other.” We do not say that we must “understand” them so that we can give them respect. Rather, we unconditionally give them the respect that we expect to be given to us simply because they are human beings with whom we share God’s world.

Lifting up the idea of diversity is not that difficult, but it can be very challenging to live the intention of diversity. Only by looking inward at those things that keep us from fully acknowledging those who are different from ourselves can we make the leap from good thoughts to right action. This is hard work, but pursuing it has the potential for creating positive change in the world. That is why embracing diversity is an act of redemptive power.

*Exodus 6:6 ** Matthew 7:1

The third cup is poured. All rise.

Pastor Kinnamon

We join together in a blessing for the Cup of Redemption and the Gift of Diversity.

Together

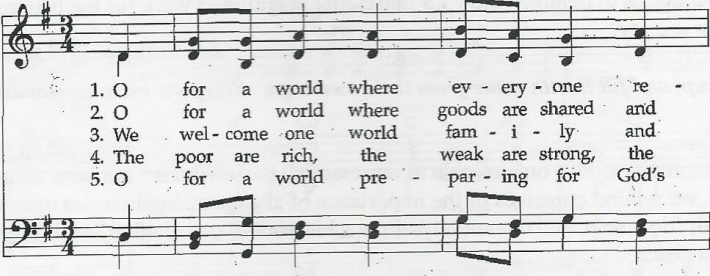
We give thanks to you, Creator of all things, for the fruit of the vine. In your infinite wisdom, you have taught us to fight for freedom for all your people. In that striving, help us to embrace not only the concept of freedom, but the gift of diversity, which lifts our souls and enriches our lives. Give us strength to use this gift with courage and determination, so to bring healing and redemption to the world. Amen.

All drink and remain standing.

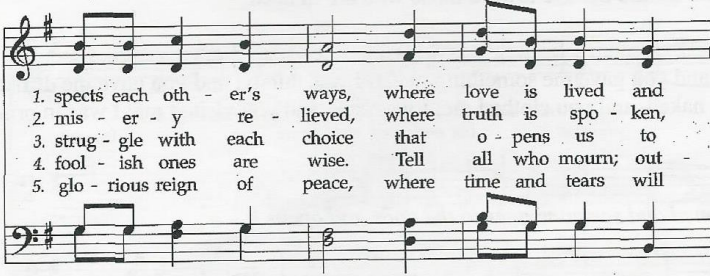
Pastor Kinnamon: Let us sing together.

Together – O For a World

O for a World



1. O for a world where ev - ery - one re -
2. O for a world where goods are shared and
3. We wel - come one world fam - i - ly and
4. The poor are rich, the weak are strong, the
5. O for a world pre - par - ing for God's



1. spect each oth - er's ways, where love is lived and
2. mis - er - y re - lieved, where truth is spo - ken,
3. strug - gle with each choice that o - pens us to
4. fool - ish ones are wise. Tell all who mourn; out -
5. glo - rious reign of peace, where time and tears will



1. all is done with jus - tice and with praise.
2. chil - dren spared, e - qual - i - ty a - chieved.
3. u - ni - ty and gives our vi - sion voice.
4. casts be - long, who per - ish - es will rise.
5. be no more, and all but love will cease.

Welcoming Our Neighbors

Rabbi David

In a traditional Jewish Seder, the front door of the home is now opened to welcome Elijah the Prophet, for whom a special cup has been set on the table. Jewish tradition teaches that the arrival of Elijah will herald the coming of the Jewish Messiah and an age of peace. The link between Passover and the coming of Elijah occurred because Passover is a festival of redemption for the Jewish people.

Part of the traditional Passover liturgy reads, "All who are hungry, let them enter and eat. All who are in need, let them come celebrate Passover."

Pastor Jackson

On our table, we have set aside a Cup of Community. It is empty, and symbolizes the peace that will only be made manifest when all people work together to create a community and society that is pledged to creating harmony, justice, prosperity, and peace for all. To demonstrate our commitment to this ideal, we will fill the cup with water, the source of life for all God's creatures. Please pass the cup around the table, adding a little water from your own glass to demonstrate your individual intention to work for the betterment of our community and our society.

All rise, pass the cup, and fill it with water from their own cups. Everyone remains standing.

Pastor Jackson

The Cup of Community is also on our table to represent all those who are not here with us this evening. In opening our doors, we remind ourselves of the importance of always maintaining an open door for those who are hungry for food, friendship, and community. In reaching out to one another, we bring closer the day when the world will be at peace.

As we open our doors in welcome to all who would join us, we remember Matthew's description of Jesus' teaching of how one should behave toward those who are in need.

Together

"I was hungry, and you gave me something to eat; I was thirsty, and you gave me drink; I was a stranger, and you invited me in; naked, and you clothed me; I was sick, and you visited me; I was in prison, and you came to me."*

*Matthew 25:35-36

The lights are dimmed and someone goes to the door and opens it.

Pastor Jackson

The open door also symbolizes a potent opportunity for personal growth and change. Jesus taught, quoting Leviticus 19:18, "Love your neighbor as you love yourself."* Loving yourself means taking the time to reflect on what your own needs are, and making a commitment to pay attention to and address those personal needs.

We take this sacred time to reflect on the matters that are closest to our heart. This is a time of immanence, when the world stands still and the gates of heaven are open to our prayers and supplications. We pray silently. Please be seated after you have completed your prayers and remain in prayerful silence until all are seated.

*Matthew 22:39

After participants are seated, the door is closed.

Pastor Jackson: Let us sing together.

Words and music are on the next page.

I'm Gonna Live So God Can Use Me

With a backbeat

1. I'm gon-na live so God can use me (God can

use me,) an-y time (yes an-y time) and an-y-where (yes an-y -

where) I'm gon-na live so God can use me (I'm gon-na live so

an-y time (an-y time,) and an-y-where. (yes an-y-where).

2. I'm gonna work... 3. I'm gonna pray... 4. I'm gonna sing...

After the singing ends, the lights are turned back on.

The Fourth Cup: The Cup of Holiness and Salvation

Pastor Kinnamon

The fourth and final cup is inspired by the covenantal statement in Exodus: "I will take you to be my people, and I will be your God"*

Holiness and Salvation are gifts available to all people. In Leviticus, we read: "I am the Lord who brought you up out of Egypt to be your God; therefore be holy, because I am holy."** Peter made reference to this verse when he said, "Just as He who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do, for it is written: "Be holy, because I am holy."***

These verses remind us of the strong scriptural and cultural links between Judaism and Christianity. Even though we differ in certain aspects of practice and faith, our sacred scriptures remind us that we share a bond of holiness and responsibility to work together to heal the world.* Exodus 6:7 **Leviticus 11:45 *** I Peter 1:15-16

Reader

We reflect on these powerful verses from Romans: “For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved. As the Scripture says, ‘Anyone who trusts in Him will never be put to shame.’ For there is no difference between Jew and Gentile—the same Lord is Lord of all and richly blesses all who call on Him, for ‘everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved’.” *

*Romans 10:10-14; Romans 10:11 quoting Isaiah 28:16; Romans 10:13 quoting Joel 2:32

Reader

With the drinking of this fourth, final cup, we commit ourselves to broadening our understanding of holiness, faith, and salvation so that we can truly discern the holiness that resides in all people.

Pastor Kinnamon

Let us pray.

Together

Blessed are you, Eternal God, who has given us the fruit of the vine, which lifts the heart and gives us joy. We give thanks for the gift of discernment that permits us to grow in faith, service, and holiness. Amen.

Looking Toward Jerusalem, the City of Peace**Rabbi David**

The traditional Jewish Seder ends with a focus on Jerusalem, the spiritual center for the Jewish people. Jerusalem is also important to Christians and Moslems, and is, of course, the city in which the Last Supper took place. Even before the building of the Israelite Temple in Jerusalem, what is today called “the temple mount” was a holy place to other religious groups. As we begin to conclude our celebration, we pray for peace in Jerusalem, in Israel, and in all the world. Let us sing together.

Together – This is My Song

Words and music are on the next page.

This Is My Song

1. This is my song, O God of all the na-tions,
 2. My coun-try's skies are blu-er than the o-cean,
 3. This is my prayer, O Rul-er of all na-tions:

a song of peace for lands a - far and mine.
 and sun - light beams on clo - ver - leaf and pine;
 let thy reign come; on earth thy will be done.

This is my home, the coun - try where my heart is;
 but oth - er lands have sun - light too, and clo - ver,
 In peace may all earth's peo - ple draw to - geth - er,

here are my hopes, my dreams, my ho - ly shrine;
 and skies are ev - ery - where as blue as mine.
 and hearts u - nit - ed learn to live as one.

Concluding Prayer

Pastor Jackson

As we prepare to conclude our Last Supper Seder, we reflect on this beautiful verse from I Corinthians. "I will pray with my spirit, but I will also pray with my mind; I will sing with my spirit, but I will also sing with my mind."* Let us give thanks together for the special time we have spent together this evening. We read together: *I Corinthians 14:15

Together

How can I repay the Lord for all God's goodness to me?
 I will lift up the cup of salvation and call on the name of the Lord.
 I will fulfill my vows to the Lord in the presence of all God's people.* *Psalm 116:12-14

Pastor Kinnamon

We came together tonight not knowing where this journey would lead us.

Together

We pray that God will be with us on our separate paths, and with us when we join in community. Until we meet again, may the grace of God go with us.

Pastor Jackson

Earlier we learned that Jesus and the disciples sang a hymn at the end of the Last Supper. We conclude our Last Supper Seder by singing **"The Trees of the Field."**

The musical score is written for a single voice in treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a 3/2 time signature. The melody is simple and hymn-like, with lyrics written below the notes. The lyrics are: "You shall go out with joy and be led forth with peace; the mountains and the hills will break forth before you; there'll be shouts of joy and all the trees of the field will clap, will clap their hands. And all the trees of the field will clap their hands, the trees of the field will clap their hands, the trees of the field will clap their hands while you go out with joy!"

You shall go out with joy and be led forth with peace; the
mountains and the hills will break forth before you; there'll be shouts of joy
and all the trees of the field will clap, will clap their hands.
And all the trees of the field will clap their hands, the
trees of the field will clap their hands, the trees of the field will
clap their hands while you go out with joy!

End of Seder

Survey - Parts I & II

Comments and Reflections

Last Supper Seder - Park Avenue Christian Church - NYC

Maundy Thursday April 1, 2010

Please write in the number that appears on your haggadah _____

Please note

The Last Supper Seder is a Demonstration Project that is part of a Doctor of Ministry dissertation being prepared by Rabbi Jo David for New York Theological Seminary. Your comments will help to refine the liturgy and the ritual. Please feel free to add comments other than those that are specifically asked for. There are two parts of this Comment and Reflections document. The first asks for responses to the part of the Seder that will take part Before Dinner. The Second part asks for feedback on the liturgy and ritual that follows the dinner. Thank you for your help.

Part I – Before Dinner

1. Prior to this experience, did you have any knowledge of the Passover holiday as celebrated by Jewish people other than accounts in the New Testament? ☐yes ☐no. Please explain.

2. Have you ever attended a Passover Seder at someone's home? ☐yes ☐no
☐I attended a Passover Seder but not in someone's home. Please explain.

3. If you had time to read the introduction prior to the Seder, did you find it helpful?
☐I didn't have time to read it. ☐I read it and found it helpful. ☐I read it but did not find it helpful
☐. It was too long ☐It didn't give enough information.

4. Overall, how did you respond to the experience of having the Seder led by a minister and a rabbi?
☐I liked it ☐no opinion. ☐I didn't like it. Please explain.

5. Overall, how did you like the experience of participating in the Seder by reading aloud from the haggadah? ☐I liked it ☐no opinion ☐I didn't like it. Please explain.

6. Material about Judaism and the Old Testament was woven into the liturgy. Please respond to the following: ☐I found the material interesting ☐I learned things I didn't know about Judaism
☐The amount of material about Judaism seemed well balanced overall ☐There was too much material about Judaism.

7. Overall, how would you rate your experience of the First Part of the Seder?
☐I enjoyed it very much ☐I enjoyed it somewhat ☐No opinion ☐I didn't enjoy it at all.
Please explain.

8. This is what I enjoyed most in the first part of the Seder:

9. With regard to the length of Part I: ☐The length was fine ☐It was a little long ☐It could have been longer ☐. If too long, how much shorter should it have been? ☐5 minutes ☐10 minutes

Part II – After Dinner

1. There were four cups of grape juice to drink during the Seder. Each was associated with a Biblical verse and a social justice concept. If you were designing this Seder, which of the following would you do: (you can choose more than one.) ☐ keep the cups they way they are ☐ do something different with each cup ☐ Dedicate the cups to important women Please explain.

2. In Part II of the Seder, we read and sang psalms. One of these was in Hebrew. Please comment on this experience. ☐ I liked singing the Hebrew ☐ It was too difficult singing the Hebrew ☐ I didn't like singing the Hebrew Please explain.

3. How did you feel about the entire Seder from a spiritual perspective? (Feel free to choose more than one.) ☐ I felt spiritually moved in a good way ☐ It had no spiritual effect on me ☐ It generally made me feel positive ☐ It made me feel hopeful Comments?

4. Overall, how did you like the entire experience of the Last Supper Seder? ☐ I liked it ☐ No opinion ☐ I didn't like it Please explain.

5. Of the musical selections that were sung in Parts 1 and 2, which did you enjoy most/least
Most _____ Least _____

6. The Last Super Seder is an attempt to help Christians feel closer to the events of the Last Supper and its Passover roots. Please respond to the following. Choose as many as you like. ☐ I think this goal was realized. ☐ I don't think this goal was reached. ☐ After experiencing this Seder, I understand the Last Supper more ☐ After experiencing this Seder, my understanding of the Last Supper is unchanged Please explain

7. This Seder was developed to be presented on Maundy Thursday/Holy Thursday.
☐ This is a good program for Maundy Thursday ☐ I would enjoy this experience at any time leading up to Easter ☐ I don't think this should be offered on Maundy Thursday ☐ I don't think this should be offered at any time leading up to Easter ☐ I don't think this program should be offered at all. Please explain.

8. Did you enjoy the dinner? ☐ yes ☐ no Please explain/make suggestions.

9. If this program was offered again, would you attend? ☐ yes ☐ no ☐ maybe Please explain.

10. Please add any comments you wish. _____

Part I

1. *Prior to this experience, did you have any knowledge of the Passover holiday as celebrated by Jewish people other than accounts in the New Testament?*

38 yes 7 no

Comments: A number of participants indicated that their knowledge of Judaism was derived from Jewish family members, Jewish friends and experiences at college.

2. *Have you ever attended a Passover Seder at someone's home?*

28 yes 19 no

Comments: Some responders indicated that they are Jewish or had a Jewish family connection. Several responders indicated that they had attended a Seder in a church.

3. *If you had time to read the introduction prior to the Seder, did you find it helpful?*

20 I didn't have time to read it 24 I read it and found it helpful

Comments: Many more participants in New York read the introduction than did participants in Warwick. One reader noted: "Interesting blending of traditions and ideas."

4. *Overall, how did you respond to the experience of having the Seder led by a minister and a rabbi?*

45 I liked it

Comments: There were no answers for "I didn't like it." Some of the comments follow:

"Eye opening experience."

“A little weird but nice.”

“Made me feel a little more on the same team.”

“Surprising, refreshing and fun!”

5. *Overall, how did you like the experience of participating in the Seder by reading aloud from the Haggadah?*

45 I liked it

Comments: One person indicated “no opinion” and one person checked “I didn’t like it.” In Warwick, the reading aloud presented issues for a number of the participants. In New York, this was not a problem. The person who didn’t like the reading aloud expressed the desire to “prepare.” However, this person was the only one to suggest this. Some comments:

“Brought the Seder to life.”

“Reading gives me a part to play.”

“I felt a sense of community.”

“Makes me – all of us – not observers.”

“Making it interactive makes me feel involved.”

6. *Material about Judaism and the Old Testament was woven into the liturgy.*

Please respond to the following:

29 I found the material interesting 19 I learned things I didn’t know about

Judaism

15 The amount of material about Judaism seemed well balanced overall

10 Too much material about Judaism

Comments: There were multiple answers to this question.

7. *Overall, how would you rate your experience of the First Part of the Seder?*

38 I enjoyed it very much 5 I enjoyed it somewhat

Comments: Most participants were extremely happy with the first part of the Seder. A few people (not clear if they were Jewish or Christian) seemed to have missed the point that this was intended to be a Christian ritual and not a Jewish Passover Seder. There were some responses that indicate this confusion – or perhaps just a wish for more Jewish material. Here are some comments:

“Especially liked current day four questions and 10 plagues.

“Interesting and important approach for both Jews and Christians.”

“Loved historic material.”

“Loved sense of community.

“Missed songs like ‘2 Zuzim’ (Had Gadya) and Dayenu.”

This is what I enjoyed most in the first part of the Seder:

“Readings were beautiful.”

“The fellowship was wonderful.”

“Music. Shared reading.”

“Participating in the Seder.”

“Marking the current 10 plagues.”

“Explanation of traditions.”

“Mini Seder Plates.”

“Meaning and tasting of food.”

Experiencing it with friends and church members and learning another custom.”

“Bringing two communities of faith to one table.”

8. *With regard to the length of Part I:*

21 The length was fine 15 It was a little long 4 It could have been longer

Comments:

I was not surprised that some of the participants found the program a little long since the length pushed the boundaries of what the Park Avenue Christian Church members generally find most comfortable. However, compared to a “normal” Passover Seder, *A Last Supper Seder* was significantly shorter. It was a very difficult balance to strike – long enough for a rich experience based on a very long framework but not so long that the participants become disengaged. I suspect that the four people who said the program could have been longer are Jewish!

Comments were not asked for, but there were a few.

“Too long; however I wouldn’t take out anything because this is a teaching and sharing instrument.”

“5 minutes too long. Maybe because many of us were getting hungry? ☺”

“I think this was fine for this group of people. The mix of people was a real plus as well.”

Part II

9. *There were four cups of grape juice to drink during the Seder. Each was associated with a Biblical verse and a social justice concept. If you were designing this Seder, which of the following would you do:*

38 keep the cups the way they are 3 Dedicate the cups to important women

Comments: As in Warwick, responders were quite happy with the way in which the cups of wine were themed.

“An interesting idea.”

“Excellent.”

In Part II of the Seder, we read and sang psalms. One of these was in Hebrew. Please comment on this experience.

37 I liked singing the Hebrew

Comments: One person said it was too difficult to sing in Hebrew and one person didn't like it. However, as with the Warwick participants, singing in Hebrew was a huge hit. This tallied with Reverend Jackson's comments to me. Christians like to sing in Hebrew! Who knew?

“Once the Hebrew was pronounced it felt comfortable (to sing.)

“There should have been more songs in Hebrew.”

How did you feel about the entire Seder from a spiritual perspective?

24 I felt spiritually moved in a good way 3 It had no spiritual effect on me

15 It generally made me feel positive 10 It made me feel hopeful

Comments: Participants were encouraged to give more than one answer and some did. Overall, responders had extremely positive responses to the Seder. Some comments:

“I liked the idea of reinterpreting for modern concepts.”

“Each couple at our table was multi faith.”

“It gave me hope.”

“I felt spiritually much closer to how Jesus must have experienced these events.”

“It gave me a lot to think about.” (From a Catholic nun – she signed her response form.)

1. *Overall, how did you like the entire experience of the Last Supper Seder?*

35 I liked it

Comments: One person had no opinion, and one person said that s/he didn’t like it, but did not offer an explanation. Some comments:

“Expected more of a spiritual experience.”

“Wonderfully creative. Well written.”

“Meaningful and joyous.”

“Beautiful to be with all these new people and celebrate with them.”

“Ended on a positive note. Hopeful.”

“Interpretation of the Seder with Christian imagery is very powerful.”

2. *Of the musical selections that were sung in Parts 1 and 2, which did you enjoy most/least.*

Comments: There was no consensus on most/least preferred music except for “Let My People Go,” which, as in Warwick, was mentioned as a favorite by a number of people.

3. *The Last Supper Seder is an attempt to help Christians feel closer to the events of the Last Supper and its Passover roots. Please respond to the following.*

29 I think this goal was realized.

27 After experiencing this Seder, I understand the Last Supper more

3 After experiencing this Seder, my understanding of the Last Supper is unchanged

Comments: Only one person didn't think the goal was reached.

7. *This Seder was developed to be presented on Maundy Thursday.*

27 This is a good program for Maundy Thursday

19 I would enjoy this experience at any time leading up to Easter

3 I don't think this should be offered on Maundy Thursday

Comments: Some comments suggested that rather than replace "traditional" Maundy Thursday liturgy, *A Last Supper Seder* could be done at any time during Holy Week or even before.

8. *Did you enjoy the dinner?*

42 yes

The dinner, which was catered by a local kosher caterer, was a huge hit. Since this program was presented during the intermediate days of Passover, all of the food was kosher for Passover. I felt that this was important because of the number of Jews who participated. Because the program in Warwick was held prior to Passover, the food was just "kosher style" – no meat with milk, and Passover style – dishes that would be eaten during Passover.

9. *If this program was offered again, would you attend?*

29 yes 2 no __10 maybe Please explain.

10. *Please add any comments you wish.*

"A wonderful evening in every way."

"This was amazing."

"I love the idea of trying to promote understanding and connection between the faiths.

Thank you so much."

“I had a great time and learned so much!”

“Great collaboration between the Christian and Jewish faiths.”

“Thanks for giving us the opportunity.”

“An excellent “new” Haggadah.”

“Enjoyed a lovely community experience. It was a warm and joyful evening.”

“Great balance between Jewish tradition and The Last Supper story.”

“As an interfaith person, it was interesting to connect my experience of Passover with Jesus’ life.”

“Very important to show similarities and points of reference.”

“Spiritually moving – especially the language about how we are called to serve.”

“The atmosphere was collegial, joyous – a renewal.”

“Reference to freedom, being freed of the bondage of self.”

“It helped develop a good sense of community and common ground.”

“I believe this is a most memorable event in my journey of faith.”

“I enjoyed sharing this special Seder with such a diverse community of people...tonight was a Holy Spirit high for me.”

“This is a very fine interfaith event and celebration. I hope it will happen in many more venues.”

“Gorgeous. Meaningful and germane to the present. A breakthrough Jewish Christian experience.”

Park Avenue Christian Church Guest Table Set Up



Leaders' Table



Dinner Buffet



Multifaith Guests



Finishing Dessert



Follow Up Note from Pastor Jackson

Sat 4/3/2010 9:18 AM

Alvin O. Jackson ajackson@parkavenuechristian.com

RE: Thank you

Dear Jo,

It was entirely my pleasure to be a part of your project. I thought Thursday evening was a grand success in every way! It was a very moving and meaningful experience for me and everyone seem to have enjoyed themselves immensely. Thank you for the opportunity to have been a part of the project and for the lovely gift. I will use the frame to place a picture taken of our table to remember the night.

I look forward to meeting with you when Katherine returns and we can do some additional review and evaluation.

Shalom,
Alvin

-----Original Message-----

From: Rabbi Jo [<mailto:rabbijo@jaf18.org>]

Sent: Fri 4/2/2010 11:41 AM

To: Alvin O. Jackson

Subject: Thank you

Dear Alvin,

Thank you, again, for your support of my project. Last night went so well. I looked quickly through a few of the feedback forms, and all have been quite positive. After the weekend I'll have the chance to examine them, and will put together a little report. Later in the month, after Katherine returns from her trip, it would be very helpful to meet with her, you, and Loraine to "debrief".

Wishing you and your family a very happy Easter.

With fond regards,

Jo

Traditional Jewish Seder Songs

Eliyahu HaNavi – Elijah the Prophet

Eliyahu hanavi.
Eliyahu hatishbi,
Eliyahu Eliyahu Eliyahu hagil'adi.

Bim'hera veyameinu
yavoh eleinu,
im mashiach ben David,
im mashiach ben David,

Elijah the prophet
Elijah the returning,
Elijah from Giliad.
May he soon come to us,
with the Messiah, the son of David.

Miriam HaN'viah - Miriam the Prophet

Miriam ha'n'via oz v'zimra b'yada.
Miriam tirkod itanu, l'hagdil zimrat olam.
Miriam tirkod itanu, l'takein et ha olam.

Bim heira v'yameinu, hi t'vi einu
El mei hayshua. El mei hayshua.

Miriam the Prophet, strength and song are in her hand. Miriam will dance with us to strengthen the world's song. Miriam will dance with us to heal the world. Soon, and in our time, she will lead us to the waters of salvation.

MA NISHTANA

Traditional

This is the traditional recitative version in the "question and answer" style of Talmud study.

Freely, in recitative style



*Repeat in similar fashion
for additional verses*

Ma nish-ta-na ha-lai-la ha-ze
Mi-kol ha-lé-lot
She-b'chol ha-lé-lot a-nu och-lin
Cha-méts u-ma-tsa
Ha-lai-la ha-ze ku-lo ma-tsa

מה נשתנה הלילה הזה
מכל הלילות
שבכל הלילות אנו אוכלין
חמץ ומצה
הלילה הזה בלו מצה

She-b'chol ha-lé-lot a-nu och-lin
Sh'ar y'ra-kot
Ha-lai-la ha-ze ku-lo ma-ror

שבכל הלילות
אנו אוכלין שאר ירקות
הלילה הזה בלו מרור

She-b'chol ha-lé-lot
En a-nu mat-bi-lin a-fi-lu pa-am a-chat
Ha-lai-la ha-ze sh'-té f'-a-mim

שבכל הלילות
אין אנו מטבילין אפילו פעם אחת
הלילה הזה שתי פעמים

She-b'chol ha-lé-lot a-nu och-lin
Bén yosh-vin
U-vén m'-su-bin
Ha-lai-la ha-ze ku-la-nu m'-su-bin

שבכל הלילות
אנו אוכלין בין יושבין
ובין מסבין
הלילה הזה בלנו מסבין

Why is this night different from all other nights? On this night why do we eat matza and bitter herbs; dip parsley in salt water and horseradish in charoset; and why do we recline at the table when we eat?

Suggested Songs for *A Last Supper Seder Haggadah*

The First Cup

I'm On My Way

(African American Spiritual)

I'm on my way to the freedom land
I'm on my way to the freedom land
I'm on my way to the freedom land
I'm on my way, praise God
I'm on my way.

I'm gonna ask my brother to come with me
I'm gonna ask my brother to come with me
I'm gonna ask my brother to come with me
I'm on my way, praise God
I'm on my way.

I'm gonna ask my sister to come with me
I'm gonna ask my sister to come with me
I'm gonna ask my sister to come with me
I'm on my way, praise God
I'm on my way.

I'm on my way, and I can't turn back
I'm on my way, and I can't turn back
I'm on my way, and I can't turn back
I'm on my way, praise God
I'm on my way.
I'm on my way to the freedom land
I'm on my way to the freedom land
I'm on my way to the freedom land
I'm on my way, praise God
I'm on my way.

This is a Day of New Beginnings

Brian Wren, 1978

(New Century Hymnal #417)

This is a day of new beginnings,
time to remember and move on,
time to believe what love is bringing,
laying to rest the pain that's gone.

For by the life and death of Jesus,
love's mighty Spirit, now as then,
can make for us a world of difference,
as faith and hope are born again.

Then let us, with the Spirit's daring,
step from the past and leave behind
our disappointment, guilt, and grieving,
seeking new paths, and sure to find.

Christ is alive, and goes before us
to show and share what love can do.
This is a day of new beginnings;
our God is making all things new.

Fill Up My Cup

#350 Presbyterian Hymnal

Fill up my cup (fill up my cup let it overflow)
Fill up my cup (fill up my cup let it overflow)
Fill up my cup (fill up my cup let it overflow)
Let it overflow with love.

Amazing grace (amazing grace, how sweet the sound)
That saved a wretch (that saved a wretch like me
I once was lost (I once was lost but now am found
Was blind but now I see.

When we've been there (when we've been there ten thousand years)
Bright shining as (bright shining as the sun)
We've no less days (we've no less days to sing God's praise
Then when we've first begun.

Fill up my cup (fill up my cup let it overflow)
Fill up my cup (fill up my cup let it overflow)
Fill up my cup (fill up my cup let it overflow)

Let it overflow with love.

The Narrative Story Telling

Let My People Go

Traditional Spiritual

When Israel was in Egypt's Land, Let my people go,
Oppressed so hard they could not stand, Let my people go.

Chorus

Go down, Moses, way down in Egypt's Land.

Tell ol' Pharoah, "Let my people go."

Thus saith the Lord, bold Moses said, Let my people go,
If not, I'll smite your first-born dead, Let my people go.

Chorus

The Lord told Moses what to do, Let my people go,
To lead the Hebrew children through, Let my people go.

Chorus

O come along Moses, you'll not get lost, Let my people go,
Stretch out your rod and come across, Let my people go.

Chorus

As Israel stood by the waterside, Let my people go,
At God's command it did divide, Let my people go.

Chorus

When they reached the other shore, Let my people go,
They sang a song of triumph o'er, Let my people go.

Chorus

We need not always weep and mourn, Let my people go,
And wear these slavery chains forlorn, Let my people go.

Chorus

O Mary, Don't You Weep

Traditional Spiritual

O Mary, don't you weep, don't you mourn
O Mary, don't you weep, don't you mourn
Pharaoh's army got drowned
O Mary, don't you weep

Some of these mornings bright and fair
Take my wings and cleave the air
Pharaoh's army got drowned
O Mary, don't you weep

When I get to heaven goin' to sing and shout
Nobody there for turn me out
Pharaoh's army got drowned O Mary don't you weep

When I get to Heaven goin' to put on my shoes
Run about glory and tell all the news
Pharaoh's army got drowned
O Mary don't you weep

Before the Second Cup

An Upper Room Did Our Lord Prepare

Fred Pratt Green

#94 Presbyterian Hymnal

An upper room did our Lord prepare
for those he loved until the end:
and his disciples still gather there,
to celebrate their Risen Friend.

A lasting gift Jesus gave his own,
to share his bread, his loving cup.
Whatever burdens may bow us down,
he by his Cross shall lift us up.

And after Supper he washed their feet,
for service, too, is sacrament.
In him our joy shall be made complete
sent out to serve, as he was sent.

No end there is! We depart in peace.
He loves beyond our uttermost:

in every room in our Father's house
he will be there, as Lord and host.

The Third Cup

O for A World

Hymn #386 – Presbyterian Hymnal

Tune: "O for a Thousand Tongues to Sing"

by Carl G. Glaser (1828) & Lowell Mason (1839)

Lyrics: by Miriam Therese Winter, 1987

O for a world where everyone respects each other's ways,
Where love is lived and all is done, with justice and with praise.

O for a world where goods are shared and misery relieved,
Where truth is spoken, children spared, equality achieved.

We welcome one world family, and struggle with each choice
That opens us to unity and gives our vision voice.

The poor are rich, the weak are strong, the foolish ones are wise.
Tell all who mourn; outcasts belong, who perishes will rise.

O for a world preparing for God's glorious reign of peace,
Where time and tears will be no more, and all but love will cease.

Before the Fourth Cup

Take My Life and Let it Be

Hymn #391 – Presbyterian Hymnal

Tune: "Hendon" H. A. Cesar Malan, 1827

Lyrics: Frances Ridley Havergal, 1874

Take my life and let it be
Consecrated, Lord, to Thee.
Take my moments and my days;
Let them flow in ceaseless praise,
Let them flow in ceaseless praise.

Take my hands, and let them move
At the impulse of Thy love.
Take my feet, and let them be
Swift and beautiful for Thee,
Swift and beautiful for Thee.

Take my voice, and let me sing,
Always, only, for my King.
Take my lips, and let them be
Filled with messages from Thee,
Filled with messages from Thee.

Take my silver and my gold,
Not a mite would I with-hold;
Take my intellect, and use
Every power as Thou shalt choose,
Every power as Thou shalt choose.

Take my will, and make it Thine;
It shall be no longer mine.
Take my heart, it is Thine own;
It shall be Thy royal throne,
It shall be Thy royal throne.

Take my love; my Lord, I pour

At Thy feet its treasure store.
Take myself, and I will be
Ever, only, all for Thee,
Ever, only, all for Thee.

I'm Gonna Live So God Can Use Me

Hymn #369 – Presbyterian Hymnal African-American Spiritual

I'm gonna live so God can use me
anywhere, Lord, anytime!
I'm gonna live so God can use me
anywhere, Lord, anytime!

I'm gonna work so God can use me
anywhere, Lord, anytime!
I'm gonna work so God can use me
anywhere, Lord, anytime!

I'm gonna pray so God can use me
anywhere, Lord, anytime!
I'm gonna pray so God can use me
anywhere, Lord, anytime!

I'm gonna sing so God can use me
anywhere, Lord, anytime!
I'm gonna sing so God can use me
anywhere, Lord, anytime!

Every Time I Feel the Spirit

Hymn #315 Presbyterian Hymnal
African-American Spiritual

Chorus

Every time I feel the spirit
Moving in my heart I will pray.
Yes, Every time I feel the spirit
Moving in my heart I will pray.

Up on the mountain my Lord spoke.
Out of His mouth came fire and smoke.
Looked all around me. It looked so fine
Till I asked my Lord if all were mine.

Chorus

The Jordan river is chilly and cold.
It chills the body but not the soul.

There aint but one train upon this track.
It runs to heaven and right back.

Chorus

Songs for Peace

If I Had a Hammer (The Hammer Song)

words and music by Lee Hays and Pete Seeger

If I had a hammer
I'd hammer in the morning
I'd hammer in the evening
All over this land
I'd hammer out danger
I'd hammer out a warning
I'd hammer out love between my brothers and my sisters
All over this land.

If I had a bell
I'd ring it in the morning
I'd ring it in the evening
All over this land
I'd ring out danger
I'd ring out a warning
I'd ring out love between my brothers and my sisters
All over this land.

If I had a song
I'd sing it in the morning
I'd sing it in the evening
All over this land
I'd sing out danger
I'd sing out a warning
I'd sing out love between my brothers and my sisters
All over this land.

Well I've got a hammer
And I've got a bell
And I've got a song to sing
All over this land
It's the hammer of justice
It's the bell of freedom
It's the song about love between my brothers and my sisters
All over this land.

Down By the Riverside

Traditional Folk Song

Gonna lay down my sword and shield
Down by the riverside
Down by the riverside
Down by the riverside
Gonna lay down my sword and shield
Down by the riverside
Ain't gonna study war no more.

Chorus

I ain't gonna study war no more,
I ain't gonna study war no more,
Study war no more.
I ain't gonna study war no more,
I ain't gonna study war no more,
Study war no more.

Gonna stick my sword in the golden sand;
Down By the riverside
Down by the riverside
Down by the riverside
Gonna stick my sword in the golden sand
Down by the riverside
Gonna study war no more.

Gonna walk with the Prince of Peace;
Down By the riverside
Down by the riverside
Down by the riverside
Gonna walk with the Prince of Peace;
Down by the riverside
Gonna study war no more.

Chorus

Gonna shake hands around the world;
Down By the riverside
Down by the riverside
Down by the riverside
Gonna shake hands around the world;
Down by the riverside
Gonna study war no more.

Chorus

We'll Understand It Better By and By

Text: Charles Albert Tindley

Music: Charles Albert Tindley; arr. by F.A. Clark

We are tossed and driven on the restless sea of time;
somber skies and howling tempests oft succeed a bright sunshine;
in that land of perfect day, when the mists are rolled away,
we will understand it better by and by.

Chorus

By and by, when the morning comes,
when the saints of God are gathered home,
we'll tell the story how we've overcome,
for we'll understand it better by and by.

We are often destitute of the things that life demands,
want of food and want of shelter, thirsty hills and barren lands;
we are trusting in the Lord, and according to God's word,
we will understand it better by and by.

Chorus

Trials dark on every hand, and we cannot understand
all the ways of God would lead us to that blessed promised land;
but God guides us with his eye, and we'll follow till we die,
or we'll understand it better by and by.

Chorus

Temptations, hidden snares often take us unawares,
and our hearts are made to bleed for a thoughtless word or deed;
and we wonder why the test when we try to do our best,
but we'll understand it better by and by.

Chorus

We Shall Overcome

Based on lyrics by Reverend Charles Tindley
Adapted by Pete Seeger and others.

We shall overcome, we shall overcome
We shall overcome some day,
Oh, deep in my heart I do believe,
We shall overcome some day.

We'll walk hand in hand, we'll walk hand in hand,
We'll walk hand in hand some day,
Oh, deep in my heart I do believe,
We'll walk hand in hand, some day.

We shall all be free, we shall all be free,
We shall all be free some day,

Oh, deep in my heart I do believe,
We shall all be free some day.

We are not afraid, we are not afraid,
We are not afraid some day,
Oh, deep in my heart I do believe,
We won't be afraid some day.

We are not alone, we are not alone,
We are not alone some day,
Oh, deep in my heart I do believe,
We won't be alone some day.

The whole wide world around, the whole wide world around
The whole wide world around some day,
Oh, deep in my heart I do believe,
The whole wide world around, some day.

We shall overcome, we shall overcome,
We shall overcome some day
Oh, deep in my heart I do believe,
We shall overcome some day.

Providence Presbyterian Church Haggadah with Communion Service

MAUNDY THURSDAY SEDER and WORSHIP

Thursday, April 9, 2009 at 6 pm

Providence Presbyterian Church

THE SEDER

(A celebration of the Passover for Christians)

Passover is the first holiday that God commanded his people to celebrate. Before they were officially a nation, while they were yet slaves in Egypt, God commanded the Passover observance. Then, when they came into the Land of Promise, it was to be established as an ordinance for the Jewish people to observe throughout all generations.

The memorial of Passover speaks of redemption and freedom. Another name for the holiday is "The Season of our Deliverance." The holiday is a joyous celebration of the time when God delivered Israel with God's mighty hand and God's outstretched arm, signifying God's love and protection to those who fear God.

Passover is a family time in the Jewish home. The observance centers around a ritual meal called the SEDER ("Seder" means the arrangement or order of service). At this special holiday meal, no leaven of any kind is to be eaten, and there are special symbolic foods, which are reminders of the events of the redemption from Egypt and deliverance from the Death Angel.

Passover speaks of spiritual redemption as well as physical redemption. For Christians the symbolism of the Passover Lamb is fulfilled in Jesus, the Messiah, who came as the Lamb of God to take away the sins of the world.

In this Maundy Thursday Seder we move from Passover celebration and remembrance to Jesus calling his disciples to the table to remember his sacrifice for us, to commit, and to celebrate the gift of his life—even as he is about to leave them. We gather in communion to "Eat this Bread, Drink this Cup" —to trust in the God who lived among us, who lives among us still and ever calls us to discipleship.



SYMBOLIC FOODS USED DURING THE SEDER

Matzo: (Unleavened bread) A reminder of the Israelites' hurried departure from Egypt, when they had to bake their bread in haste without permitting the dough to ferment. It is also called the bread affliction.

Parsley: The greens are symbols of thankfulness to God for the fruit of the earth.

Salt Water: The salt water reminds us of the Red Sea event and the tears of suffering.

Moror: (Bitter herb) A symbol of the bitter hardships which the Israelites experienced in Egypt.

Charoset/Haroses: A mixture of apples, almonds, raisins, and cinnamon blended together to represent the clay and mortar used to build the pyramids during the servitude in Egypt.

Lamb: A symbol of the deliverance of the Israelite people who were spared death because of the blood of the lamb which was placed on the doorways of their homes.

Wine (or Grape Juice): A symbol of joy and thanksgiving.

Empty Chair: Remembers those people who live in lands where they cannot celebrate the Passover as free people.

Elijah Chalice: A small filled glass placed on the table in the hope that the Messiah will come to complete salvation.

THE SEDER

LIGHTING THE FESTAL CANDLES

AFTER ALL OF THE GUESTS HAVE BEEN SEATED, AND ALL LIGHTS ARE EXTINGUISHED, THE MOTHER COMES IN TO LIGHT THE CANDLES. AFTER SHE LIGHTS THE CANDLES, THE MOTHERS PRAY THE FOLLOWING PRAYER:

All Mothers: Praised art Thou, O Lord our God, Ruler of the universe, who has sanctified us by Your commandments and has commanded us to light the festival lights. Praised art Thou, O Lord our God, Ruler of the universe, Who has kept us alive and sustained us and brought us to this season. May we be consecrated tonight, O God, by the light of Your countenance shining upon us in blessing and bringing us peace.

ALL: AMEN

Leader 1: With song and praise and with symbols of our feast, let us renew the memories of our past. Let all who are hungry come to eat with us.

KADESH—THE SANCTIFICATION OF THE PASSOVER MEAL

UNISON PRAYER:

Praised art Thou, O Lord our God, Ruler of the universe, Who has chosen us from all people and exalted and sanctified us with Your commandments. In love you have given us, O Lord our God, solemn days of joy and festive seasons of gladness. Even so, You give to us this Passover season, our festival of freedom, in which we remember our exodus from Egypt. You have chosen us for Your service and have made us sharers in the blessing of Your holy festivals. Praised art Thou, O Lord, Who blesses Israel and the festive seasons.

THE PASSOVER SYMBOLS

Leader 1: Rabbi Gamaliel used to say, "The one who does not explain the three essential symbols of the Seder has not discharged his Passover duty. They are Pesach—the paschal Lamb, Matzo—the unleavened bread, and Moror—the bitter herbs.

Guest 1: What is the meaning of Pesach?

THE LEADER LIFTS UP THE SHANK-BONE AND ANSWERS:

Leader 1: Pesach means the Paschal Lamb, and is symbolized by this lamb bone. It was eaten as a memorial of God's favors, as it is said: "It is the sacrifice of the Lord's Passover, for in that God passed over the houses of the children of Israel in Egypt, when God smote the Egyptians and delivered our houses." (Ex. 12:27). As God in the ancient "watch night" passed over and spared the houses of Israel, so did God save us in all kinds of distress, and so may God always shield the afflicted, and forever remove every trace of bondage from all humanity.

YACHAZ—THE BREAKING OF THE MIDDLE MATZO

Leader 2: Now I break the middle matzo and conceal one-half as the *afikomen*. Later we share it, as in days of old Passover offering itself was shared at the Temple of Jerusalem. Among people everywhere sharing of bread forms a bond of fellowship. This bond joins us with our own people and with all who are in need, with the wrongly imprisoned and the homeless in the street. For our redemption is bound up with the deliverance from bondage of people everywhere.

THE LEADER BREAKS THE MIDDLE MATZO AND HIDES ONE-HALF. THEN THE LEADER LIFTS UP THE DISH OF MATZOS AND SAYS:

Leader 2: Behold the bread of affliction which our fathers ate in Egypt. Let all who are hungry come and eat. Let all who are in need come and celebrate the Passover with us. May it be God's will to redeem us from all trouble and from all slavery. Next year at this season may the whole house of Israel be free.

ALL: With gratitude for the blessings which we have been given, we invite the less fortunate to share with us at this meal, and also at other times.

GUEST 2: What is the meaning of Matzo?

THE LEADER LIFTS UP THE MATZO AND ANSWERS:

Leader 2: Matzo, called the bread of affliction, was the hasty provision that our ancestors made for their journey as it is said: "And they baked unleavened cakes of the dough which they brought out of Egypt, and could not tarry, neither had they prepared for themselves any provisions." (Ex. 12: 39). The bread which of necessity they baked, unleavened, thus became a symbol of divine help.

ALL: Praised art Thou, O Lord our God, Ruler of the universe, Who has sanctified us by Your commandments and has commanded us to eat matzo.

THE TOP MATZO AND THE REMAINDER OF THE MIDDLE MATZO ARE BROKEN,
DISTRIBUTED, AND EATEN.

Guest 3: What is the meaning of *moror*?

THE LEADER LIFTS UP THE BITTER HERBS AND ANSWERS:

Leader 3: Moror means "bitter herbs." We eat it to recall the lives of our ancestors which were embittered by the Egyptians, as we read: "And they made their lives bitter with hard labor in mortar and bricks and in all manner of field labor. Whatever task was imposed upon them was executed with the utmost rigor." (Ex 1:14). As we share our festivities this night, we rejoice in the heroic spirit which trials developed in our people. Instead of being embittered by those experiences, they were sustained and strengthened. In every generation, we, too, should regard ourselves as brought out of Egypt and redeemed. Not only in Egypt, but in many other places have there been burdens and afflictions. We, too, must be champions of God.

ALL: Praised art Thou, O Lord our God, Who has sanctified us by your commandments and has commanded us to eat the bitter herb.

EVERYONE TASTES OF THE MOROR/HORSERADISH

THE KIDDUSH CUP

Guest 1: Why do we drink wine with this meal?

Leader 4: We take up the Kiddush Cup and proclaim the holiness of this day of Deliverance. Blessed is God Who fulfills God's promises, Who is ever faithful to God's servants who trust in God. In every age oppressors rise against us to crush our spirits and bring us low. From the hands of all these tyrants and conquerors, the Lord rescues and restores the people.

ALL: (recite before drinking) Praised art Thou, O Lord our God, Ruler of the universe, Who has created the fruit of the vine.

ALL TAKE THE FIRST SIP OF JUICE.

KARPAS—BLESSING THE SPRING GREEN

Guest 2: Why do we dip these greens into the salt water?

Leader 5: The greens are a sign of thanking God for this good earth. The salt water reminds us of the tears and sweat of our ancestors who were slaves for so long in Egypt under the cruel Pharaoh.

ALL: May our gratitude for the blessings which we enjoy help to soften the pain of sorrow, and transform tears into joy and appreciation.

EVERYONE TAKES SOME PARSELY WHICH IS THEN DIPPED IN SALT WATER
AND EATEN.

THE EMPTY CHAIR (The person sitting next to the empty chair says)

This is the chair for the one who cannot be here—who may be working or tending the young or ill this night, or the loved one who is gone from our midst. We remember the people who are not here this night in the symbol of the empty chair. It is also a symbol of the one who is yet to be invited into this bond of fellowship—for wherever there is an empty chair, there is room at the table.

THE FOUR QUESTIONS (The youngest person at the table asks)

Why is this night different from all other nights? On all other nights we eat either leavened bread or unleavened bread. Why on this night, do we eat only unleavened bread?

On all other nights, we eat all kinds of herbs, why on this night do we eat especially bitter herbs?

On all other nights, we do not dip the herbs. Why, on this night, do we dip them in salt water?

On all other nights, we eat without special festivities. Why, on this night, do we hold this Seder service?

HALLEL (Praise Psalms)

Leader 1: Hallelujah. Praise, O ye servants of the Lord, Praise the name of the Lord.

ALL: BLESSED BE THE NAME OF THE LORD FROM THIS TIME FORTH AND FOREVER.

Leader 2: From the rising of the sun unto the going down thereof, the Lord's name is to be praised.

ALL: THE LORD IS HIGH ABOUT ALL NATIONS, WITH GLORY ABOVE THE HEAVENS.

Leader 3: Who is like the Lord our God, enthroned on high?

ALL: WHO LOOKS DOWN LOW UPON HEAVEN AND UPON THE EARTH?

Leader 4: Who raises up the poor out of the dust, and lifts up the needy out of the dunghill;

ALL: THAT THE LORD MAY SET US WITH PRINCES, EVEN WITH THE PRINCES OF GOD'S PEOPLE.

Leader 5: Who makes the barren woman to dwell in her house as a joyful mother of children. Hallelujah.

ALL: WHEN ISREAL CAME FORTH OUT OF EGYPT, THE HOUSE OF JACOB CAME FROM A PEOPLE OF STRANGE LANGUAGE;

Leader 1: Judah became God's sanctuary, Israel God's dominion.

ALL: THE SEA SAW IT, AND FLED; THE JORDAN TURNED BACKWARD.

Leader 2: The mountains skipped like rams; the hills, like young sheep.

ALL: WHAT AILS THEE, O THOU SEA, THAT YOU FLEE? YOU JORDAN, THAT YOU TURN BACKWARD?

Leader 3: You mountains, that you skip like rams; you hills, like young sheep?

ALL: TREMBLE, EARTH, AT THE PRESENCE OF THE LORD, AT THE PRESENCE OF THE GOD OF JACOB;

Leader 4: Who turned the rock into a pool of water, the flint into a fountain of waters.

MAGID—TELLING THE PASSOVER STORY

Leader 1: We celebrate tonight because we were Pharaoh's slaves in Egypt. But the Lord our God rescued us, with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm. If God had not brought our ancestors out of Egypt, we and our children and our children's children would still be in bondage to the Pharaohs in Egypt. Therefore, it is important for us to tell of the departure from Egypt. The more we talk about the story of Exodus, the deeper will be our understanding of what freedom means, and the stronger our determination to win freedom for ourselves and for others.

THE STORY OF THE OPPRESSION

ALL: It is well for all of us, whether young or old, to consider how God's help has been our unfailing stay and support through ages of trial and persecution. Ever since God called our father Abraham from the bondage of idolatry to the Lord's service of truth, God has been our Guardian; for not in one country alone nor in one age have violent people risen up against us, but in every generation and in every land, tyrants have sought to destroy us; and the Holy One, blessed be God, has delivered us from their hands.

Leader 2: The Torah tells us that when Jacob our father was a homeless wanderer, he went down into Egypt, and sojourned there few in number. All the souls of his household were threescore and ten. And Joseph was already in Egypt; he was the governor over all the land. Joseph brought his father and his brothers to Egypt and gave them a possession, as Pharaoh commanded. And Israel dwelt in the land of Goshen; and they got themselves possessions, and were fruitful, and multiplied exceedingly.

And Joseph died, and all his brothers, and all that generation. And there arose a new king over Egypt, who knew not Joseph. And he said to his people: "Behold, the people of the children of Israel are too many and too mighty for us; come let us deal cunningly with them, lest they multiply, and if we go to war they might join themselves with our enemies, and fight against us. Therefore, they set over the Israelites taskmasters to afflict them with burdens. And they built for Pharaoh the cities, Pithom and Raamses. But the more the Egyptians beat them, the more the Israelites multiplied and the more they spread abroad.

And the Egyptians dealt ill with us, and afflicted us, and laid upon us cruel bondage. And we cried unto the Lord, the God of our ancestors, and the Lord heard our voice and saw our affliction and our toil and our oppressions. And the Lord brought us forth out of Egypt, with a mighty hand and with an outstretched arm and with great terror and with signs and with wonders. The Lord sent before us Moses and Aaron, and Miriam. And the Lord brought forth the people with joy, God's chosen ones with singing. And the Lord guided them in the wilderness, as a shepherd his flock.

Therefore God commanded us to observe the Passover, in its season, from year to year, that God's law shall be in our mouths, and that we shall declare God's might unto our children—God's salvation to all generations.

ALL: Who is like unto you, O Lord, among the mighty? Who is like unto you, glorious in holiness, awesome in praises, doing wonder? The Lord shall reign forever and ever.

Hymn: Go Down Moses/ When Israel Was in Egypt's Land

PH 334

When Israel was in Egypt's land; Let my people go!
Oppressed so hard they could not stand; Let my people go!

*Refrain: Go down Moses, Way down in Egypt's land;
Tell old Pharaoh let my people go!*

Thus spoke the Lord, bold Moses said: Let my people go!
If not I'll smite your first born dead; Let my people go!

Refrain

THE TEN PLAGUES—THE CUP OF DELIVERANCE

Leader 3: When Pharaoh defied the command of God and refused to release the Israelites, he brought trouble upon himself and his people, for the Lord afflicted the land of Egypt with plague.

ALL: These plagues came upon the Egyptians because of their evil; yet we do not rejoice over their downfall and defeat.

Leader 4: Judaism teaches that all people are children of God, even our enemies who would seek to destroy us.

ALL: We cannot be glad when anyone needlessly suffers. So we mourn the loss of Egyptians and express sorrow over their destruction.

Leader 5: In the Jewish tradition a cup of wine symbolized life and its joy. On this day, when we celebrate the triumph of a sacred cause, our happiness is not complete. Others were sacrificed for its sake. We shall pour off the wine in our cups, therefore, as we recall these plagues visited upon the Egyptians.

EACH PERSON LETS A DROP OF WINE FALL FROM THE END OF THE FINGER
ON A PAPER NAPKIN AS EACH PLAGUE IS NAMED. THIS SYMBOLIZES REGRET
THAT THE VICTORY HAD TO BE PURCHASED THROUGH MISFORTUNE VISITED
UPON GOD'S CHILDREN, THE EGYPTIANS.

All recite in unison:

1. BLOOD
2. FROGS
3. GNATS
4. FLIES
5. CATTLE DISEASE
6. BOILS
7. HAIL
8. LOCUSTS
9. DARKNESS
10. SLAYING OF THE FIRST BORN

ALL RAISE THE SAME CUP AND SAY:

Praised art Thou, O Lord our God, Ruler of the universe, Who has redeemed us and our ancestors from Egypt, and has enabled us to observe this Passover, the feast of unleavened bread. Our Lord, our God and God of our forebears, may we, with your help live to celebrate other feasts and holy seasons. May we rejoice in your salvation and be gladdened by your righteousness. Grant deliverance to humankind through Israel, your people. May your will be done through Jacob, your chosen servant, so that your name shall be sanctified in the midst of all the earth, and that all people be moved to worship you with one accord. We shall sing new songs of praise unto You for our redemption and for the deliverance of our souls. Praised art Thou, O God, Redeemer of Israel.

ALL TAKE THE SECOND SIP OF JUICE.

Leader 1: Haroses, sometimes called Haroseth, symbolized the clay, mortar, and cement our ancestors were forced to use to build the pyramids and places in Egypt.

EVERYONE MAY EAT THE HAROSES.

PERSONAL DELIVERANCE

Leader 2: This story we recite is not just a history. Each of us must feel that it is our own deliverance which we tell. This puts upon each of us an obligation to continue the struggle for human dignity and freedom.

ALL: EACH GENERATION STANDS ON THE ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE GENERATION BEFORE, AND EACH GENERATION IN TURN MUST CONTRIBUTE TO THE ADVANCEMENT OF THE BETTERMENT OF THE WORLD.

Leader 3: Every age sees another injustice uncovered as the concept of human rights expands.

ALL: IT IS OUR DUTY TO CONTRIBUTE TO THE IMPROVEMENT OF THE HUMAN CONDITION.

Leader 4: The events in Egypt were but the beginning...

ALL: AS PARTICIPANTS IN THE EXODUS, WE DEDICATE OURSELVES TO THE CAUSE THERE BEGUN.

DAYENU (Leader and All repeat the refrain "Dayenu" which is the equivalent to "it would have been enough!")

Leader 5: Had God brought us out of Egypt and not divided the sea for us,
People: Dayenu

Leader 1: Had God divided the sea, and not permitted us to cross on dry land,
People: Dayenu

Leader 2: Had God permitted us to cross the sea on dry land, and not sustained us for forty years in the desert,

People: Dayenu

Leader 3: Had God sustained us for forty years in the desert and not fed us with manna,

People: Dayenu

Leader 4: Had God fed us with manna and not given us the Sabbath,

People: Dayenu

Leader 5: Had God given us the Sabbath and not brought us to Mount Sinai,

People: Dayenu

Leader 1: Had God given us the Torah, and not led us into the Land of Israel,

People: Dayenu

Leader 2: Had God built for us the Temple, and not sent us prophets of truth,

People: Dayenu

Leader 3: Had God sent prophets of truth, and not made us a holy people,

People: Dayenu ALL: How much more then are we to be grateful unto the Lord for the manifold favors God has bestowed upon us!

THE PASSOVER MEAL IS NOW SERVED AND EATEN

During the course of the meal people are encouraged to talk informally about freeing actions that they remember or that are occurring at the present time. For example:

1. In what ways does the quest for freedom continue today?
2. What are some of the freedoms enjoyed today?
3. What evidence do you see of creation being freed from the bonds of winter?
4. Where are the struggles for freedom today—personal, community, international?

SHARING THE AFIKOMEN

Leader 2: Our Seder meal cannot be concluded until the afikomen has been tasted by all.

THE CHILDREN OR THE YOUNGEST AT THE TABLE SEARCHES FOR THE HIDDEN PIECE OF MATZO. WHEN IT IS FOUND, IT IS TASTED BY ALL. NOTHING IS EATEN AFTERWARDS SO THAT MATZO MAY BE THE LAST FOOD TASTED.

THE GRACE AFTER THE MEAL (*Led by Leader 3*)

Leader 3: Let us say grace.

ALL: Praised be the name of the Lord now and forever.

Leader: Let us praise the Lord of whose food we have eaten, and by whose goodness we live.

ALL: Blessed be the Lord and blessed be the Lord's name.

Leader: Praised art Thou, O Lord our God, Ruler of the Universe. In goodness You sustain all the world. With grace, kindness, and compassion You give nourishment to every living thing You have created. Your mercy endures forever.

ALL: Through Your great goodness, food has not failed us.

Leader: Remember us this day in kindness.

ALL: Amen.

Leader: Visit us this day with blessing.

ALL: Amen.

Leader: Blessed is the one who trusts in the Lord; the Lord will be a help.

ALL: The Lord will give strength unto the people: the Lord will bless the people with peace. Amen.

THE CUP OF REDEMPTION

THE THIRD SIP OF JUICE IS ABOUT TO BE TAKEN.

(Lifting the Cup) Leader 4: Together we take up the third cup of wine, recalling the divine promise. The struggle for freedom is a continuous struggle, for never do we reach total liberty and opportunity. In every age, some new freedom is won and established, adding to the advancement of human happiness and security. Let us drink of His blessing of redemption.

ALL: Praise art Thou, O Lord our God, Ruler of the Universe, creator of the fruit of the vine.

ALL DRINK THE THIRD SIP OF JUICE

OPENING THE DOOR FOR ELIJAH

Leader 5: We open the door for Elijah, the blessed prophet of hope. May his spirit enter this home at this hour, and every home, bringing a message of hope for the future, faith in humanity, and the assurance that freedom will come to all.

ALL: In every age the concept of freedom changes. Each generation is duty bound to discover the character of freedom for its time. The events in Egypt were but the beginning of a force in history which will forever continue. In this spirit we see ourselves as participants in the Exodus, and dedicate our energies to the course there begun. In our day we shall defend the heritage of freedom. We join now in praising God's holy name. For He delivers us from mourning to rejoicing, from darkness to light.

GATHERING FOR THE LAST SUPPER

Call to Worship and Reflection

Prayer of Confession (in Unison)

O Christ, in your presence we discover who we are. You wash our feet, and we learn how reluctant we are to serve one another. Even as you prepare to give yourself for the sake of the world, we are still seeking things for ourselves. Our love lives on the surface, and yet you invite us to eat with you at your table. Forgive us, and help us to value your presence more dearly, that we may find this meal to be a celebration of joy and hope. Amen.

Assurance of Pardon

New Testament Scripture

Luke 22:14-20

Eat this Bread

Taize

Andrew Foster and Micah Johnson

Eat this bread, drink this cup, come to me and never be hungry

Eat this bread, drink this cup, trust in me and you will not thirst.

(please join in singing the response)

The Sharing of the Last Supper

As we come forward join in communion together

please join in singing the response for *Eat this Bread*.

Prayer of Thanksgiving (in Unison)

Almighty God, you enable us to cross over from despair to hope, from brokenness to wholeness, from death to life. We thank you for the love of Jesus, which moved him to risk himself to redeem humanity—for the grace we experience in receiving these symbols of the life He gave. Through lives given in commitment to you, make us worthy of this great love. Amen.

Benediction

One Lead us forth from this place—to discover anew the Cross and the Resurrection.

All *Strengthened by your Spirit, fed at your table, we give thanks for your grace, O God. Amen.*

The sanctuary at Providence Presbyterian Church
will be open Good Friday –noon to 3 pm
for prayer station reflections on the Seven Last Words of Christ.

Please join us for Easter Worship with Providence congregations 6 am at Swan Point Cemetery, 585 Blackstone Boulevard, Providence and in our sanctuary 10 am Easter morning, April 12.

Bibliography

Christianity

Books

- Bell, Catherine. *Ritual Theory, Ritual Practice*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1992.
- Ben-Chorin, Schalom. *Brother Jesus: The Nazarene through Jewish Eyes*. Translated and edited by Jared S. Klein and Max Reinhart. Athens: The University of Georgia Press, 2001.
- Bockmuehl, Markus. *Jewish Law in Gentile Churches: Halakah and the Beginning of Christian Public Ethics*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2003.
- Borg, Marcus J. *Evolution of the Word: The New Testament in the Order the Books Were Written*. New York: Harper One, 2012
- Bradshaw, Paul F. *Early Christian Worship: A Basic Introduction to Ideas and Practice*. Collegeville: The Liturgical Press, 1996.
- _____. *The Search for the Origins of Christian Worship: Sources and Methods for the Study of Early Liturgy*, 2nd ed. New York: Oxford University Press, 2002.
- Cantalamesa, Raniero, and James M. Quigley. *Easter in the Early Church: An Anthology of Jewish and Early Christians Texts*. Edited by Joseph T. Lienhard. Collegeville: The Order of St. Benedict, 1993.
- Charlesworth, James H. *Jesus' Jewishness: Exploring the Place of Jesus Within Early Judaism*. New York: The Crossroad Publishing Company, 1996
- _____. *Jesus Within Judaism: New Light from Exciting Archaeological Discoveries*. New York: Doubleday, 1988
- _____. *The Earliest Christian Hymnbook: The Odes of Solomon*. Eugene: Cascade Books, 2009.
- Chilton, Bruce. *Rabbi Jesus: An Intimate Biography*. New York: Image Books, 2002.

- Clark, Linda, Marian Ronan, and Eleanor Walker. *Image-Breaking, Image-Building: A Handbook for Creative Worship with Women of Christian Tradition*. New York: Pilgrim Press, 1981.
- Comper, J. *A Popular Handbook on the Origin, History, and Structure of Liturgies*. Edinburgh: R. Grant & Son, 1898.
- Cook, PhD, Michael J. *Modern Jews Engage the New Testament: Enhancing Jewish Well-Being in a Christian Environment*. Woodstock: Jewish Lights Publishing, 2008
- Crossan, John Dominic. *The Historical Jesus: Live of a Mediterranean Jewish Peasant*. New York: Harper Collins Publishers, 1992.
- Day, John. *Yahweh and the Gods and Goddesses of Canaan*. Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplement Series 265. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2000.
- Dix, Dom Gregory. *The Shape of the Liturgy*. New York: Continuum International Publishing Group, 1993.
- Eusebius. *The History of the Church*. Translated and Edited by Paul L. Maier. Grand Rapids: Kregel Publications, 2007.
- Gallagher, Nora, and Phyllis Tickle. *The Sacred Meal: The Ancient Practices Series*. Nashville: Thomas Nelson, Inc., 2009.
- Grimm, Veronika. *From Feasting to Fasting: Attitudes to Food in Late Antiquity*. New York: Routledge, 1996.
- Hanhart, Karel. *The Open Tomb: A New Approach, Mark's Passover Haggadah +/- 72 C.E.* Collegeville: The Liturgical Press, 1995.
- Jeremias, Joachim. *The Eucharistic Words of Jesus*. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1966
- _____. *Jerusalem in the Time of Jesus*. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1978
- Jung, L. Shannon. *Sharing Food: Christian Practices for Enjoyment*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2006.
- Kalas, J. Ellsworth. *365 Days From Genesis Through Revelation*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1993.
- Kee, Howard Clark. *Understanding the New Testament*. 5th edn. Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall, 1993.

- Keener, Craig S. *The Gospel of John: A Commentary*. 2 vols. Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers, 2003.
- LaTourette, Kenneth Scott. *A History of Christianity: Beginnings to 1500*. Vol.1. Revised. ed. New York: Harper & Row, 1975.
- Matlins, Stuart M., and Magida, Arthur J., eds. *How to be a Perfect Stranger: The Essential Religious Etiquette Handbook*. Woodstock: Skylight Paths Publishing, 2006.
- Meier, John P., and Joel Peter Johnson. *A Marginal Jew*. Vol. 1 of *Rethinking the Historical Jesus*. New York: Doubleday, 1991.
- . *Mentor, Message and Miracles*. Vol. 2 of *A Marginal Jew: Rethinking the Historical Jesus*. New York: Doubleday, 1994.
- . *Companions and Competitors*. Vol. 3 of *A Marginal Jew: Rethinking the Historical Jesus*. New York: Doubleday, 2001.
- Nodet, Etienne, and Justin Taylor. *The Origins of Christianity*. Collegeville: The Liturgical Press, 1998.
- Osborn, Ronald E. *The Faith We Affirm: Basic Beliefs of Disciples of Christ*. St. Louis: Bethany Press, 1974.
- Pecklers, Keith. *Worship: A Primer in Christian Ritual*. Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 2003.
- Pope, Richard M. *The Church and its Culture: A History of the Church in Changing Cultures*. St. Louis: Bethany Press, 1965.
- Rosenberg, Roy. *Who Was Jesus?*. Lanham: University Press of America, 1986.
- Smith, Dennis E., ed. *Chalice Introduction to the New Testament*. St. Louis: Chalice Press, 2004.
- Smith, Dennis E., Taussig, Hal E. *Many Tables: The Eucharist in the New Testament and Liturgy Today*. London: SCM Press, 1990.
- Wagner, Richard. *Christianity for Dummies, A Reference for the Rest of Us!* Hoboken: Wiley Publishing Inc., 2004.
- Sanders, E.P. *Paul and Palestinian Judaism: A Comparison of Patterns of Religion*. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1977.

- Schmemmann, Alexander. *Of Water and the Spirit: A Liturgical Study of Baptism*. Yonkers: St. Vladimirs Seminary Press, 1997.
- Sigal, Phillip. *The Halakhah of Jesus of Nazareth According to the Gospel of Matthew*. Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2007.
- Somé, Malidoma. Patrice. *Ritual: Power, Healing and Community*. New York: Arkana, 1993.
- Stevenson, J. *A New Eusebius: Documents Illustrative of the History of the Church to AD 337*. London: SPCK, 1960.
- Tickle, Phyllis A. *Re-discovering the Sacred: Spirituality in America*. New York: Crossroad Press, 1995.
- Vermes, Geza. *Jesus the Jew*. Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 1984.
- Watkins, Keith. *Faithful and Fair: Transcending Sexist Language in Worship*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1981.
- Young, Brad H. *Meet the Rabbis: Rabbinic Thought and the Teachings of Jesus*. 3rd printing. Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers, Inc., 2008.

Bibles and Commentaries –New Testament

Barker, Kenneth L., John H. Stek, Walter W. Wessel, and Ronald Youngblood, eds. *Zondervan NIV Study Bible, Fully Revised*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2002.

New Covenant Prophecy Edition. Colorado Springs: International Bible Society, 1983.

Sandmel, Samuel, M. Jack Suggs, and Arnold J. Tkacik, eds. *The New English Bible with the Apocrypha, Oxford Study Edition*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1976.

Haggadot

Dan, John, M.A., M. Div. *Behold! The Lamb of God: An Easter Passover Seder Service for Christians*. The Lakes: Eden Publishing, 1995.

Gould, Meredith. *Come to the Table: A Catholic Passover Seder for Holy Week*. Princeton: Plowshares Publishing, 2005.

Jeffers, Beverly. *A Christian Observance of Passover: The Haggadah*. Fountain Valley: Joy Publishing, 1997.

Keck, Thomas D. *The Fifth Cup Haggadah: A Messianic Jewish Haggadah*. Chagrin Falls: Dotan Publications, 2003.

Lipis, Joan R. *Celebrate Passover Haggadah*. San Francisco: Purple Pomegranate Productions, 2000.

Lipson, Eric-Peter. *Passover Haggadah: A Messianic Celebration*. San Francisco: JFI Publishing, 1986.

Providence Presbyterian Church. *Maundy Thursday Seder and Worship*. Congregational handout. 2009

Roepke, Michael. *A Guide to a Christian Seder*. Martinsville: Airleaf Publishing, 2006.

Rosen, Moishe, and Ceil Rosen. *Christ in the Passover*. Chicago: Moody Publishers, 2006.

Smith, Pastor Michael, and Rabbi Rami Shapiro. *Let Us Break Bread Together: A Passover Haggadah for Christians*. Brewster: Paraclete Press, 2005.

Stallings, Joseph M. *Celebrating an Authentic Passover Seder: A Haggadah for Home and Church*. San Jose: Resource Publications, Inc., 1994.

The Messianic Passover Haggadah, Revised and Updated. Clarksville: Messianic Jewish Publishers,

Judaism

Books

Birnbaum, Philip. *Encyclopedia of Jewish Concepts*. New York: Hebrew Publishing Company, 1988.

Bokser, Baruch M. *The Origins of the Seder : the Passover Rite and Early Rabbinic Judaism*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984.

Cernea, Ruth Fredman. *The Passover Seder: An Anthropological Perspective on Jewish Culture*. Lanham: University Press of America, 1995

Charlesworth, Dr. James H., and Dr. Loren L. Johns. *Hillel and Jesus: Comparisons of Two Major Religious Leaders*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1997

Chilton, Bruce, and Jacob Neusner. *Jewish and Christian Doctrines: The Classics Compared*. New York: Routledge, 2000.

Cohen, Shaye J.D. *From the Maccabees to the Mishna*. 2nd ed. Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2006.

Elbogen, Ismar. *Jewish Liturgy: A Comprehensive History*. Raymond P. Scheindlin, trans. New York: Jewish Publication Society, 1993

Finkelstein, Louis. *Pharisaism in the Making: Selected Essays*. New York: Ktav Publishing, 1972.

Frymer-Kensky, Tikva et al., *Christianity in Jewish Terms*. Boulder: Westview Press, 2000.

Fundaminsky, S. *Tosefta pesachim translated and annotated with an introduction and a comparative study of Mishnah and Tosefta pesachim* Dissertation: Thesis (Ph. D.)--University of London, 1949. Manuscript : Microfilm Archival

Guggenheimer, Heinrich. *The Scholar's Haggadah: Ashkenazic, Sephardi, and Oriental Versions*. Northvale, NJ: Jason Aronson Inc., 1995

Holtz, Barry W., ed. *Back to the Sources: Reading the Classic Jewish Texts*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1992.

- Hutchinson, Aaron. *The Passover and Sprinkling of Blood kept through Faith*. Boston: Thomas and John Fleet, 1774
- Josephus, *The Jewish War*, accessed on line - <http://www.sacred-texts.com/jud/josephus/>
- _____. *Antiquities of the Jews*. Accessed on line - <http://www.sacred-texts.com/jud/josephus/ant-2.htm>
- Klein, Rabbi Isaac. *A Guide to Jewish Religious Practice. Supplement by Rabbi Joel Roth*. New York: The Jewish Theological Seminary of America, 1992.
- Klinghoffer, David. *Why the Jews Rejected Jesus: The Turning Point in Western History*. New York: Three Leaves Press, Doubleday: 2005.
- Kunst, Judith M. *The Burning Word: A Christian Encounter with Jewish Midrash*. Brewster: Paraclete Press, 2006.
- Levine, Amy-Jill. *The Misunderstood Jew: The Church and the Scandal of the Jewish Jesus*. New York: Harper Collins, 2006.
- Locks, Gutman G. *The Spice of Torah-Gematria*. New York: Judaica Press, 1985.
- Nickelsburg, George W.E. *Ancient Judaism and Christian Origins: Diversity, Continuity, and Transformation*. Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 2003.
- Olitzky, Kerry M., and Ronald H. Isaacs. *The Complete How To Handbook for Jewish Living*. Jersey City: Ktav Publishing House, Inc. 2004.
- Pasternak, Velvel. *The International Jewish Songbook*. Cedarhurst, NY: Tara Publications, 1994.
- Pelikan, Jaroslav. *Whose Bible Is It? A Short History of the Scriptures*. London: Penguin Books, 2006.
- Porten, Bezalel. *The Elephantine Papyri in English: Three Millennia of Cross-Cultural Continuity and Change*, 2nd ed.; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 1996.
- Rivkin, Ellis. *What Crucified Jesus? Messianism, Pharisaism, and the Development of Christianity*. New York: UAHC Press, 1997.
- Sandmel, David F., Rosann M. Catalano, and Christopher M., Leighton, eds. *Irreconcilable Differences? A Learning Resource for Jews and Christians*. Boulder: Westview Press, 2001

Schiffman, Lawrence. *From Text to Tradition: A History of Second Temple and Rabbinic Judaism*. Jersey City: Ktav Publishing House, Inc., 1991.

———. *Who Was a Jew? Rabbinic and Halakhic Perspectives on the Jewish Christian Schism*. Jersey City: Ktav Publishing House, Inc., 1985.

Shahak, Israel. *Jewish History, Jewish Religion: The Weight of Three Thousand Years*. Sterling: Pluto Press, 2002.

Sommer, Benjamin D. *The Bodies of God and the World of Ancient Israel*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009.

Steingroot, Ira. *Keeping Passover*. New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 1995.

Telushkin, Rabbi Joseph. *Jewish Literacy: The Most Important Things to Know About the Jewish Religion, Its People, and Its History, Revised Edition*. New York: Harper Collins, 2008.

The JPS Commentary on the Haggadah, Tabouri, Joseph, ed., Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 2008.

Trachtenberg, Joshua. *Jewish Magic and Superstition*. Cleveland: Meridian Books and the Jewish Publication Society, 1961.

Wyllen, Stephen M. *The Jews in the Time of Jesus: An Introduction*. New York: Paulist Press, 1996.

Bibles, Commentaries, Dictionaries, Encyclopedias, Mishna, Talmud, Siddurim

Ben-Yehuda's Pocket English-Hebrew Hebrew- English Dictionary. Ben-Yehuda, Ehud, Weinstein, David, eds. New York: Pocket Books, 1965.

Berlin, Adele, Marc Zvi Brettler, and Michael Fishbane, eds. *The Jewish Study Bible*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2004.

Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia. Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1984.

Brown, F., S. Driver, and C. Briggs, eds. *The Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon*. 2nd ed. Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers, 1996.

Encyclopaedia Judaica. Jerusalem: Keter Publishing House Jerusalem, Ltd., 1978.

ETZ Hayim Torah and Commentary. New York: The Jewish Publication Society, 2004.

JPS Hebrew-English Tanakh. 2nd ed. Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1999.

JPS Torah Commentary: Exodus. Sarna, Nahum M., ed., Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society, 1991.

Kohlenberger III, John R., ed. *The Interlinear NIV Hebrew-English Old Testament.* Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1994.

Mishna: Hebrew/English Edition. 2nd ed. Blackman, F.C., S., Philip, ed New York: Judaica Press Ltd., 1982.

Pietersma, Albert, and Wright, Benjamin G., trans. *A New English Translation of the Septuagint: A New Translation of the Greek into Contemporary English – An Essential Resource for Biblical Studies.* New York: Oxford University Press, 2007.

Siddur Sim Shalom. Harlow, Rabbi Jules, ed., New York: The Rabbinical Assembly and The United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism, 1985.

Talmud, Hebrew/English Edition. Epstein, Rabbi Dr. Isidore, ed Brooklyn: Soncino Press, 1961.

The Authorized Daily Prayer Book, Revised Edition. Hertz, Joseph H., ed., New York: Bloch Publishing Company, 1985.

The Jewish Annotated New Testament, New Revised Standard Version. Levine, Amy-Jill, Brettler, Marc Zvi, eds. New York: Oxford University Press, 2011.

Zondervan NIV Study Bible: Fully Revised. Barker, Kenneth L., revision ed. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2002.

Haggadot

Bronstein, Herbert, ed. *A Passover Haggadah: The New Union Haggadah, Revised Edition.* New York: Penguin Books, 1975.

Bauch, Cantor Jason Norman. *Bubby and Zaydy's Happy Haggadah: An Ethical Humanist Seder.* Lake Peekskill: Punim Press, 1994.

Ben Tsur, Chaim, ed. *Passover Haggadah: The Original Tradition of the Jews of Yemen.* Brooklyn: Association of Jewish Yemenites in the United States, 1997.

Bogot, Rabbi Howard I., and Rabbi Robert J. Orkand. *A Children's Haggadah.* New York: Central Conference of American Rabbis, 1994.

Cohen, Nachman. *The Historical Haggadah.* Yonkers. Torah Lishmah Institute, 2002.

- Davis, Rabbi Menachem, ed. *The Interlinear Haggadah: Schottenstein Edition*. Brooklyn: Mesorah Publications, Ltd., 2005.
- Elias, Rabbi Joseph. *The Artscroll Mesorah Series Haggadah*. Brooklyn: Mesorah Publications, Ltd., 1988.
- Freedman, Jacob, *Polychrome Historical Haggadah for Passover*. Springfield: Jacob Freedman Liturgy Research Foundation, 1974.
- Goldschmidt, Daniel E. D. *The Passover Haggadah: Its Sources and History*. Jerusalem: Bialik Institute, 1969.
- Green, Leona S. *The Traditional Egalitarian Passover Haggadah*. South Euclid: Norlee Publishing Ltd., 2002.
- Grishaver, Joel Lurie. *Building Jewish Life Haggadah*. Los Angeles: Torah Aura Productions, 1989.
- Hoffman, Maida. *A Family Seder in 20 Easy Steps*. 4th ed. Riverwoods: Anvil Publishing, 1992.
- Kalechofsky, Robert, and Roberta Kalechofsky, eds. *Haggadah For The Vegetarian Family*. Marblehead: Micah Publications, 2000.
- Kasher, Menachem Mendel. *Haggadah Shelemah*. Jerusalem: Machon Torah Shelemah, 1967.
- Kook, Rabbi Abraham Isaac. *Aviv ha- 'olam (Springtime of the World): Passover Haggadah*. Collected by Bezalel Naor. Spring Valley, NY. Orot, Inc. 2004.
- Klenicki, Rabbi Leon, and Myra Cohen Klenicki. *The Passover Celebration: A Haggadah for the Seder*. Chicago: Liturgy Training Publications, 2001. (Joint publication of the Anti-Defamation League and the Archdiocese of Chicago for Jewish seders in which Christians participate).
- Levitt, Rabbi Joy, and Rabbi Michael Strassfeld. *A Night of Questions: A Passover Haggadah*. (Elkins Park: The Reconstructionist Press, 2000.
- Levy, Rabbi Richard N. *On Wings of Freedom: The Hillel Haggadah for the Nights of Passover*. Hoboken: Ktav Publishing House, Inc., 1989.
- Maxwell House Passover Haggadah*. Kraft Foods, 2001.
- Meisels, Rabbi David. *The Seder Talk Haggadah: Reasons & Customs for the Seder*. Brooklyn: Self-published, 2001.

- My People's Passover Haggadah: Traditional Texts, Modern Commentaries*, 2 vols. Hoffman, PhD, Rabbi Lawrence A., and David Arnow, PhD, eds. Woodstock: Jewish Lights Publishing, 2008.
- Rabinowicz, Rachel Anne, ed. *Passover Haggadah: The Feast of Freedom*, 2nd ed. New York: The Rabbinical Assembly, 1982.
- Roth, Cecil. *Archaeological Passover Haggadah*. New York: Adama Books, 1992.
- _____. *The Haggadah: A New Edition*. London: Soncino Press, 1934.
- Rubinstein, Howard S., Rubenstein, and Judith S. Rubinstein. *Becoming Free: A Biblically Oriented Haggadah for Passover*. El Cajon: Granite Hills Press, 1993.
- Siddur of Saadiah Gaon, 10th century*. Davidson, I., Assaf, S, Joel, B. I. eds. Jerusalem: Mekize Nirdamim, 1941.
- Silberman, Shoshana. *A Family Haggadah II*. Minneapolis: Kar-Ben Publishing, 2007.
- Stern, Chaim. *Gates of Freedom Haggadah*. New Jersey: Berman House, 1999.
- The Amsterdam Haggadah of 1695*. (Reproduction.) New York: Orphan Hospital Ward of Israel.
- The Haggadah*. Elias, Rabbi Joseph ed., New York: Mesorah Publications, Ltd, 1978.
- The Passover Haggadah*. Adin Steinsaltz, ed. Jerusalem: Carta, 1983.
- The Venice Haggadah with Judeo-Italian Translation*. Venice, 1609. (Reproduction) New York: Orphan Hospital Ward of Israel.
- The Journey Continues: The Ma'yan Passover Haggadah*. Tamara Cohen, ed, New York: The Jewish Community Center in Manhattan, 2002.
- The Rishon Transliterated Haggadah*. Brooklyn: Rishon Publications, 1995.
- Wark, Mary Ann Barrows. *We Tell It to Our Children. A Haggadah for Seders with Young Children*. St. Paul: Mensch Maker's Press, 1988.
- Wiesel, Elie. *A Passover Haggadah*. Edited by Marion Wiesel. New York: Touchstone, 1993.
- Yaari, Abraham. *Bibliography of the Passover Haggadah From the Earliest Printed Edition to 1960*. Jerusalem: Bamberger and Wahrman, 1960.

Zion, Noam, and Dishon, David. *A Different Night: The Family Participation Haggadah*. Jerusalem: The Shalom Hartman Institute, 1997.

Multifaith Bibliography

Books

Appiah, Kwame Anthony. *Cosmopolitanism: Ethics in a World of Strangers*. New York: W. W. Norton, 2006.

Barlas, Asma. *Believing Women in Islam: Unreading Patriarchal Interpretations of the Qur'an*. Austin: University of Texas, 2002.

Drucker, Rabbi Malka. *Women and Judaism*. Westport: Praeger, 2009.

Ginsburg, Marvell. *The Tattooed Torah*, Illustrated by Martin Lemelman. New York: UAHC Press, 1983.

Ilona, Remy. *The Igbos: Jews in Africa*. Self published, 2007

Ipgrave, Michael, ed. *Scriptures in Dialogue: Christians and Muslims studying the Bible and the Qur'an Together*. London: Church Publishing House, 2004.

Journal of Gender & Religion in Africa, vol 17.1, Isabel Aaowo Phiri, ed. Pietermaritzburg: University of Kwazulu-Natal, 2011.

Jung, Rabbi Dr. Leo. *Fallen Angels in Jewish, Christian and Mohammedan Literature*. Philadelphia: Dropsie College for Hebrew and Cognate Learning, 1926.

Katz, Nathan. *Spiritual Journey Home: Eastern Mysticism to the Western Wall*. Jersey City: Ktav Publishing House, Inc. 2009.

Le Tord, Bijou, ed. *A Book of Prayers From Around the World*. New York: Doubleday, 1992.

Magida, Arthur J. *Opening the Doors of Wonder: Reflections on Religious Rites of Passage*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006.

Niebuhr, Gustav. *Beyond Tolerance: Searching for Interfaith Tolerance in America*. New York: Viking, 2008.

Sasso, Rabbi Sandy Eisenberg. *But God Remembered: Stories of Women from Creation to the Promised Land*. Woodstock: Jewish Lights Publishing, 1995.

Smart, Ninian, and Frederick W. Denny, eds. *Atlas of the World's Religions*, 2nd ed. New York: Oxford University Press, 2007.

Under One Canopy: Readings in Jewish Diversity. Karen Primack, ed. New York: Kulanu, Inc., 2003

World of Memory and Wisdom: Encounters of Jews and African Christians. Jean Halperin and Hans Ucko, eds. Geneva: World Council of Churches Publications, 2005

Journals

Allman, Mark. "Eucharist, Ritual & Narrative : Formation of Individual and Communal Moral Character," *Journal of Ritual Studies* 14 no. 1 (2000): 60-68.

Bokser, Baruch M. "Ritualizing the Seder," *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 56 no. 3 (Fall 1988): 443-471.

Brumberg-Kraus, Jonathan D. "'Not By Bread Alone . . .': The Ritualization of Food and Table Talk in the Passover Seder and in the Last Supper," *Semeia* 86 (1999): 165-191.

Busey, Robert S. "Luke 22:7-23," *Interpretation* 52 no. (January 1 1998): 70-73.

Carmichael, Deborah Bleicher. "David Daube on the Eucharist and the Passover Seder," *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* no. 42 (January 1991): 45-67.

Cullen I. K. "The Bearing Of Old Testament Terminology On The Johannine Chronology Of The Final Passover Of Jesus," *Novum testamentum* 31 no. 4 (October 1989): 316-324.

Daly, Robert J. "Eucharistic origins: from the New Testament to the liturgies of the Golden Age," *Theological Studies* 66 no. (March 1 2005): p 3-22.

Dumm, Demetrius. "Passover and Eucharist." *Worship* 61 no. 3 (May 1987): 199-208.

Foley, Edward. "Which Jesus Table? Reflections On Eucharistic Starting Points," *Worship* 82 no. 1 (January 2008): 41-52.

Goldstein, Elyse. "Jewish Feminism And 'New' Jewish Rituals: Imitative or Inventive?" *Reconstructionist* 63 no. 1 (Fall 1998): p 60-66.

Horvath, Tibor. "Who Presided At The Eucharist : A Comment On BEM," *Journal of Ecumenical Studies* 22 no. 3 (Summer 1985): p 604-607.

Jones, Chuck. "Mastering Ceremony : Pondering The Significance Of The Lord's Supper," *Restoration Quarterly* 33 no. 4 (1991): 239-242.

- Lindsay, Dennis R. "Todah and Eucharist : The Celebration of the Lord's Supper as a 'Thank Offering' in the Early Church," *Restoration Quarterly* 39 no. 2 (1997): 83-100.
- Madden, Kathryn. "Ritual, Drama, and the Unconscious in the Eucharist : Contributions of Victor Turner to Depth Psychology and Religion," *Union Seminary Quarterly Review* 53 no. 1-2 (1999): 111-124.
- Mann, Thomas W. "Passover : The Time of Our Lives," *Interpretation* 50 no. 3 (July 1996): 240-250.
- McKenna, John H. "Eucharist and memorial," *Worship* 79 no. 6 (November 2005): 504-522.
- Olson, Emelie A. "The Use of Religious Symbol Systems and Ritual in Turkey : Women's Activities at Muslim Saints' Shrines," *Muslim World* 84 no. 3-4 (July-October 1994): 202-216.
- Perkins, PHEME. "From Symposium To Eucharist. The Banquet In The Early Christian World," *Theological Studies*, vol. 66 issue 1 (Mar. 2005): 186-187.
- Pobee, John S. "Bible Study in Africa : A Passover of Language," *Semeia*, no. 73 (1996): 161-179.
- Routledge, Robin L. "Passover and Last Supper," *Tyndale Bulletin* 53 no. 2 (2002): 203-221.
- Senn, Frank C. "The Lord's Supper, not the Passover Seder," *Worship* 60 no. 4 (1986): 362-368.
- Spickard, James V. "Experiencing Religious Rituals : A Schutzian Analysis Of Navajo Ceremonies," *SA. Sociological Analysis* 52 no. 2 (Summer 1991): 191-204.
- St John, John. "The Sacred Meal : The Roots Of Christian Ritual," *Dialogue & Alliance* 6 no. 3 (Fall 1992): 52-69.
- Tegels, Aelred. "Seder Meals And Passion Plays," *Worship* 60 no. (January 1 1986): p 74-76.
- Theiss, Norman. " Passover Feast of the New Covenant," *Interpretation* 48 no. 1 (January 1994): 17-35.
- Thurston, Bonnie Bowman. 'Do This' : A Study On The Institution Of The Lord's Supper," *Restoration Quarterly* 30 no. 4 (1988): 207-217.

Wilson, Kimberly A. "A Transformed Heart," *Lutheran Woman Today: Spirited Discipleship* (January/February 2001): p. 21-25

Web-Based Material

Archive.org - Seder Rav Amram Gaon – first standard haggadah – 856-876 C.E.
<http://archive.org/stream/sederravamramhas02sidduoft#page/240/mode/2up>. Accessed Nov. 19, 2013.

Avirtualpassover.com - <http://avirtualpassover.com/pdf/introduction.pdf>. Accessed Nov. 19, 2013.

Belk, Dr. Akiva G. *The Completed Jew*
<http://www.jewishpath.org/messianicsthecompletedjew.html> - "completed Jew."
Accessed Nov. 20, 2013.

Biblicalarchaeology.org - Jesus and the Last Supper
<http://www.biblicalarchaeology.org/daily/people-cultures-in-the-bible/jesus-historical-jesus/was-jesus-last-supper-a-seder>. Accessed Oct. 19, 2013.

Biblical maps - <http://www.lds.org/scriptures/bible-maps/map-2?lang=eng> – map of journey of Israelites into Canaan. Accessed Nov. 19, 2013.

Cambridge Journals. Interpreting the Last Supper: Sacrifice, Spiritualization, and Anti-Sacrifice".
Jonathan Klawans. *New Testament Studies*, (2002). 48:1-17. Cambridge University Press.
<http://journals.cambridge.org/action/displayAbstract?jsessionid=03144CC868946D1F69922F49ABF0FE9.tomcat1?fromPage=online&aid=91829>. (Accessed November 19, 2009. Accessed Aug.10, 2013.

Christianity.about.com – Order and Dating of the Books in the New Testament -
http://christianity.about.com/od/newtestamentbooks/New_Testament_Books_of_the_Bible.htm. Accessed Nov. 11, 2013.

Dailyhalacha.com – Passover <http://www.dailyhalacha.com/m/halacha.aspx?id=141>.
Accessed Nov. 11, 2013.

Dating of the Gospels
http://www.bc.edu/content/bc/schools/stm/c21online/resources/birthofjesus/intro/the_dating_of_the_gospels.html. Accessed Nov. 12, 2013.

Declaration on the Relation of the Church to Non-Christian Religions: Nostra Aetate, proclaimed by His Holiness Pope Paul VI on October 28, 1965, Article 4.

http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_decl_19651028_nostra-aetate_en.html. Accessed March 12, 2014.

Gilmarks.com – Blog Exploring Jewish Food and Culture with Gil Marks. Afikomen (Tzafun). When the Afikomen was Something to Avoid.
<http://gilmarks.com/wordpress/?p=128>. Accessed Nov. 12, 2013.

Halachipedia.com – Jewish Law - http://halachipedia.com/index.php?title=Main_Page. Accessed Nov. 4, 2013.

Jewishvirtuallibrary.org - . Accessed Nov. 5, 2013.

Judaism.com – The Origins of the Seder by Rabbi Professor David Golinkin.
http://judaism.about.com/od/passover/a/seder_golinkin.htm. Accessed Nov. 13, 2013.

Karaite Korner – <http://www.karaite-korner.org/abib.shtml> The Jewish Agency -
<http://www.jafi.org/JewishAgency/English/Home>. Accessed Nov. 18, 2013.

Myjewishlearning.com – Passover -
http://www.myjewishlearning.com/holidays/Jewish_Holidays/Passover/The_Seder/Haggadah/New_Haggadot.shtml. Accessed Nov. 12, 2013.

Religion Facts. “The Last Supper and the Da Vinci Code.” Religion Facts.
http://www.religionfacts.com/da_vinci_code/last_supper.htm. Accessed Nov. 15, 2009).

Shlomodrash.com – The World History of Haroset by Steven “Shlomo” Lipton.
http://shlomosdrash.com/haroset_history.pdf. Accessed Dec. 3, 2013.

The Jewish Agency - <http://www.jafi.org.il/JewishAgency/English/Israel/Educational/>

The Rejection of Pascal’s Wager: A Skeptic’s Guide to Christianity. “The Last Supper.” Paul N. Tobin, 2000-2004. <http://www.rejectionofpascalwager.net/index.html>. Accessed Nov. 15, 2009.

The Sacred Page. “The Last Supper, the Atonement, and Alfred Loisy.” A blog written by three Catholic professors of Scripture and Theology: Michael Barber, John Paul the Great Catholic University, San Diego; Brant Pitre (Notre Dame Seminary, New Orleans), and John Bergsma (Franciscan University, Steubenville.) <http://www.thesacredpage.com/2007/03/last-supper-atonement-and-alfred-loisy.html>. Accessed Nov. 15, 2009.

Theological Studies.org.uk. “Last Supper/Lord’s Supper: More Than a Parable in Action?” Melvin Tinker. Originally appeared in *Themelios* 26.2 (Spring 2001): 18-28. Reprinted by permission of the author.

http://www.theologicalstudies.org.uk/article_supper_tinker.html. Accessed Nov. 15, 2009.

Treseder, Terry W. *Passover Promises Fulfilled in the Last Supper*. Ensign, 1990
<http://www.lds.org/liahona/1991/03/passover-promises-fulfilled-in-the-last-supper?lang=eng>. Accessed Nov. 4, 2013.

Womensvoicesforchange.org – The Feminist Seder -
<http://womensvoicesforchange.org/letty-cottin-pogrebin-on-37-years-of-the-feminist-seder.htm>. Accessed Nov. 26, 2013.